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BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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To the memory of my wife,
this book is lovingly dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

SOME years ago, Georg Brandes declared of himself: "I am not a philosopher; for that I am too small. I am not a critic; for that I am too big."

It is certain that to call the great Danish writer merely a critic would be to limit too narrowly the position which he holds in the culture of Europe. To give an accurate definition of Brandes we should have to invent a new word; but it is not probable that we should need the word again, as it is not likely that the world will ever have another Brandes.

We associate the critic with literature, but Georg Brandes is bigger than literature. We expect the critic to sweep away the old and outworn and to adjust us to the new and practical. That has been Brandes' work, but only a part of it. We demand of the critic that he shall interpret for us what is real and lasting in works of art, thus revealing to the passing age the invisible spirit of itself and anticipating the verdict of posterity on the poet and artist of to-day.

All that Brandes has done, but something

more besides. He has drawn together in himself all the streams of culture of the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth century as expressed in European letters and esthetics. He has not consciously created an esthetic or philosophical system. He has, however, fused together the million fragments of European culture and thrown over them the light of his own bright realism. What he has wrought and represents is not a brilliant mosaic of ideas, but a genuinely unique picture of the best in European culture during two and a half generations.

When Brandes finished his studies in Copenhagen sixty years ago, Danish life and literature were still tied by the bonds of a narrow orthodoxy. Conservatism still ruled the university and intellectual circles, and the heavy mysticism of Kierkegaard hung over souls of the younger men. Into this atmosphere young Brandes brought a fresh spirit of freedom, lifting the heavy curtains of literary convention and letting in a light of realism from the land of Saint Beuve and Renan. He went to France and learned from Taine that literature must be the expression of the collective spirit of a people. He went to England and learned from John Stuart Mill the explosive doctrine of the political eman-

cipation of woman. He came back and proclaimed these things in his brilliant way in the "Nyt Dansk Maanedskrift," a leading publication of the day, and in many pamphlets and lectures. He delivered that series of epoch-making lectures that form the "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature"; a book as profound as philosophy and as interesting as romance. He gathered around him a group of young crusaders who believed that henceforth in Denmark theology and literature must walk separately.

The big-wigs of the university branded him as a false prophet and refused him a professorship. He fought the same sort of battle at Copenhagen that about the same time, on a much smaller scale, John Fiske was fighting at Harvard. Any man who in that day declared the Positivist philosophy to be his creed was as sure to fall under the ban of heresy in Cambridge as in Copenhagen. Anyone who did not hide his sympathy for evolution might expect in either place to be cast into outer darkness. Those were epic days for Danish intellectual circles, for Brandes has always been a natural fighter. Before they were ended, the door was flung wide open for the entry of modern European thought and the forward march of Danish literature had begun.

This was a great patriotic service. But there was another just as great, and here it is the whole North that owes a debt to Brandes' powerful pen. He first opened the way for Scandinavian authors to an understanding audience in Germany, France and England. Through his articles and essays the reading public of the world outside got their first knowledge of Danish writers like Jacobsen. Brandes leveled the path on which Ibsen walked into a world-wide popularity. He discovered and proclaimed to the world the genius of Strindberg, Sweden's greatest master of the psychological drama. Before his fiftieth birthday Georg Brandes was the recognized ambassador of Northern letters at the court of European culture.

But we no longer think of him merely as a citizen of Scandinavia, still less of Denmark. He interpreted the North to Europe, but before that mission was performed he had begun to interpret Europe to itself. In early years he had set forth English naturalism and French realism to his fellow countrymen, but with an eye always on Denmark and Danish conditions. But following this he came into his own as a critic of all European literatures. He early fathomed for the French the genius of their own Zola and

Maupassant. He was the first foreigner to comprehend and expound the rise of the realistic school of Hauptmann and Sudermann in Germany. He made Nietzsche's acquaintance and showed a profound appreciation of the philosophy of the superman before the German thinker had a corporal's guard of followers in his own country. His interpretation of Goethe extends over more than a generation and was finally made into two portly volumes after his seventieth birthday.

Georg Brandes' work on Shakespeare, the highwater mark of his critical insight, is the most brilliant esthetic study of the great Briton in any non-English tongue. His extraordinary linguistic equipment enabled him to break into the sealed world of the Slav. His journey into Poland and his studies of the Polish people brought the social and political problems of that race into the range of Western Europe. He pushed his studies further eastward into Russia. His appreciation of the genius of the Russian Byron, Puschkin; of Dostojewsky, and Tolstoy brought these great writers and their works in sharp outline to the knowledge of circles of the North and West when they had previously been little more than strange and hard names.

There are three great attributes which we have a right to expect of a critic: the courage to brave tradition, the willingness to accept the new, and a freedom from inherited and traditional bias. All of these Georg Brandes possesses in a high degree. There have been times when he seemed too ready for a fight and those who have attacked him have usually had reason to remember it. From the days more than fifty years ago when he braved the reactionaries of Copenhagen, down to and through the war and the Treaty of Versailles, he has never been afraid to stand alone against a powerful public opinion. He is not one of those who cling to the false jewel of consistency. He has never hesitated to change his theories nor to raise a new battle flag, and in his long life he has passed through many different stages. He has been a radical collectivist with Taine, a radical individualist with Michelangelo and Goethe, and a radical aristocrat with Nietzsche. He has been independent and international always, but reactionary never.

Some men seem to come into life loaded with traditional prejudice. Brandes had no such loose ballast aboard and he has in a quite extraordinary degree been able to see eye to eye with each successive generation and recognize the value of

each new movement as it appeared. Perhaps this is due in part to his Jewish heritage. Werner Sombart has pointed out how valuable a part the Jew plays in the business life of Northern Europe as an economic reagent, setting in motion the Teutonic mass, which, whether North German or Dutch or Scandinavian, has something of the stolidity and conservatism in its nature which needs and responds to agitation. It is something like the role of chemical reagent that Brandes has played in the world, and which no man could play who came to his work loaded by such a weight of national, religious and social prejudices as most of us lap up with the milk of childhood.

It is not necessary to say that this freedom is joined with a very positive idealism. The man who can present the work of Michelangelo and Shakespeare and Goethe and Tolstoy and Zola and Strindberg with equal fairness and equal sympathy has within him a lofty ideal of humanity and a deep sense of the essential unity of all ages and all cultures.

Brandes adds to this a constant freshness of appreciation, eternally youthful and instinct with the spirit of a Columbus and a crusader. To master the genius of Shakespeare in his sixties,

Goethe in his seventies and Michelangelo in his eighties indicates an ever fresh creativeness that time cannot fade nor custom stale.

Georg Brandes is unique in his contribution to the development of European thought. Certainly he is also unique in the history of Denmark. No other Dane has ever stretched himself like a great zone across the history of his country as Brandes has done. No Dane, and it may be assumed, no Scandinavian, has ever so thoroughly represented his people's cultural history. But he has done more than that. He is the only critic who has ever completely identified himself with the whole of Europe's culture and the entire spirit of the age. For such a man, then, the name of critic is merely too narrow—call him rather an apostle of culture.

ROBERT HERNDON FIFE.

Columbia University, June 1st, 1922.

PREFACE

PERHAPS no greater obligation rests on a writer who owes much of his advancement to the inspiring message of another writer, than the discharge of such a literary debt. In the present instance, the genius and influence of Georg Brandes have been so overwhelmingly the moving force for whatever one individual may have accomplished, that the least that can be done in return is to set down in the pages that are to follow some facts in connection with a literary career of unique character which might otherwise be left untold until such a time when the principal under discussion is no longer here. This slight tribute to Georg Brandes is therefore paid to him as the great scholar and critic enters the ranks of octogenarians.

More than twenty-five years ago the start of a journalistic career in America brought with it the opportunity to place Georg Brandes before the American reading public through the columns of representative newspapers and magazines. The present writer, Danish like Brandes, on the advice of the late Jacob A. Riis, embraced

journalism as his avocation in life and set himself the task to interpret Scandinavian culture and literature to American readers. In particular it was the works of Georg Brandes that lent themselves quite readily to such treatment as might inform the people of the western world regarding the outstanding qualities in an author whose fame Europe had long acknowledged.

Aside from what the long established works of Brandes in the original Danish required in order to make intelligent comment, as certain other books appeared in English translations there was a further opportunity for bringing them to the attention of Americans. But while "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature," "William Shakespeare," and a number of lesser books have been translated from time to time, there yet remain to see the light in the English language such monumental achievements as Brandes' "Goethe," "Voltaire," "Julius Caesar," and "Michelangelo." If in this monograph the greater part of attention is directed to these four works, the reason is that they not only sum up his labors of the past twenty years, but in a measure afford the better insight into the personality of this Danish critic.

When Georg Brandes attained his three-score

and ten the present writer believed that the time had arrived for the presentation of such facts as would furnish a compact picture of his unique career. However, circumstances prevented the execution of the task. Now that the literary world has honored Brandes on his eightieth birthday, "Georg Brandes in Life and Letters" comes before the reader as a very slight token of the esteem in which the present writer holds the man whose craftsmanship stands to him as a loadstar on the literary firmament. If it will be found that what is here presented is sympathetic throughout, let it be understood that appreciation and not criticism per se has been the motive. In tracing this unusual career the purpose has been to draw some such general picture as might afford an insight into the characteristics of Georg Brandes as literary artist and world-citizen. If this purpose has been accomplished, it will be reward enough for what at any rate has been a labor of love.

J. M.

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GEORG BRANDES IN LIFE AND LETTERS

CHAPTER I

BREAKING A LANCE WITH TRADITION AND STUPIDITY

AT certain periods in the life of any man who has attained fame it is customary to glance in retrospect across the years that have gone to the making of the sum total of his recognized achievement. In the case of some noted writer it may be the twenty-fifth anniversary of literary activity that furnishes the incentive for a reexamination of endeavor. Or perhaps the attaining of his three-score and ten brings renewed publicity to bear on an author with international reputation. Again, it may remain for Father Time to wield his scythe before the larger public comes to a full recognition of what such a personality means to his generation.

In the case of Georg Brandes, now in his

eighty-first year, not only is it good to know that he still is among the living and in full possession of his remarkable faculties, but there is cumulative evidence that this foremost among critics stands complete victor in a battle that literary history will take account of as one of the most important fought for a principle that knew no compromise. The honors paid Brandes on November third, 1921, the fiftieth anniversary of his first lecture at the University of Copenhagen, went to prove that there no longer is any question to what extent he has brought renown to the little country, where his name at one time spelled anathema in the eyes of the ultra-conservatives.

There is a saying of Victor Hugo's to the effect that there are no small countries; that the greatness of a nation no more depends upon the number of its inhabitants than the greatness of an individual is to be measured by his height. In other words, quality and not quantity is what counts. If nothing more were to be adduced to lift Denmark to a conspicuous place among the nations, the fact that it is the home land of Georg Brandes suffices to give it eminence. The Danish people have reason to feel proud that Brandes' "William Shakespeare, a Critical

Study," years ago was acclaimed one of the best works ever written on the subject of the immortal poet. His gallery of portraits, conspicuous among which are the Goethe, the Voltaire, Julius Caesar, Michelangelo, are striking testimony in proof of the fact that as the years rolled on Brandes retained his remarkable ability to place before his readers characterizations that make living the personalities that have aided in shaping world-events.

Georg Brandes needs no apologist at this late day. From the first appearance of his "Dualism in Our Newest Philosophy," written at the age of twenty-one, to the recent publication of "Michelangelo Buonarroti," his writings have constituted landmarks in European literary history. It is, of course, a fact that in "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature," Brandes has produced a work that scholars the world over recognize as one of the most unique contributions to the history of literature. And the further fact that the six volumes constituting this work are available in English, naturally make it better known to American audiences than those subsequent books not yet available in translations.

Few writers of any period or any country

have done more than Brandes toward clarifying historical facts by means of picturesque description. He was only twenty-one years old when he was awarded the gold medal of the University of Copenhagen for his essay dealing with the fatalistic tendencies among the ancients. Philosophy and aesthetics were his particular studies. The lucidity of his style and the delightful manner in which he could convert any dry-as-dust subject into something entertaining was out of the ordinary at that day. He not only surprised but irritated the staid pedagogues of the time. In reality, from the very first he had to assume the defensive. He had opened a new vein, true enough, but it was for him to prove that the ore brought to the surface was pure and indestructible.

Obtaining his doctor's degree, Georg Brandes spent several years in travel. It was then that he met such men as Mill, Taine, Renan and others whose influence on that particular period was indisputable. Nor did they fail to impress a mind which like his was receptive to a degree. Their progressive ideals appealed wonderfully to this young Dane, who early became familiar with the leading languages of Europe and who thus was able to go directly to the fountain-heads

and investigate for himself the literary treasures of the various countries visited by him. It is this linguistic facility which made it possible for Brandes to write so intimately about the great characters of history.

It was on his return to Denmark, when he was not yet thirty, that Georg Brandes began to deliver at the University of Copenhagen the series of lectures that did nothing less than revolutionize history-teaching in northern Europe. He humanized epochal events by centering the attention upon this or that great personality. The fruits of these lectures, delivered over a period of ten years, we find incorporated in the "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature."

CHAPTER II

TRIBUTE PAID BRANDES ON OCCASION OF GOLDEN JUBILEE

ON the occasion of Georg Brandes' golden jubilee as university lecturer, November the third, 1921, as already referred to, Brandes himself appeared before one of the most distinguished gatherings ever assembled at Copenhagen, where he spoke on Homer with special reference to the gods and heroes of the Hellenic period; revealing himself as ever a master of speech, and a Homeric interpreter able to throw new and interesting light on the great Odyssey and the Iliad.

There will be occasion later to make further mention of this address. What is of immediate concern is the tribute paid the great critic by scholars who embraced the opportunity to voice their appreciation. For instance, in his address of welcome to Brandes, Professor Olaf Thomsen, of the University of Copenhagen, called attention to the fact that every new idea has to

pass through three stages. The first is when the originator of a new idea stands in the open while the battle for and against his idea rages all around him. The second stage is when the originator himself retreats into the background, the battle standing between this idea and others. Finally, the third stage arrives when this particular idea has conquered.

"Georg Brandes, it is in this manner that you have scored a victory," declared Professor Thomsen. "We bring you today our heartfelt thanks for what you have created and given us; not only us, but humanity. Everything you have produced has the stamp of life. We rise to greet you and to pay you tribute."

The personal element was in evidence as Professor J. L. Heiberg addressed Brandes as follows: "I am a student from that day which we celebrate this evening. But Georg Brandes' famous lectures went right over the head of the young man from the provinces who was rather shy and on whom the clamor that the lectures aroused had a somewhat frightening effect. For those who can look back that far it seems little less than remarkable to observe the change that has taken place in the public's attitude toward Georg Brandes. Fifty years ago he appeared as the

rebel and destroyer of all that seemed holy and honored in the eyes of the community. To-day he is looked upon as some kind of national saint, whose aid is sought in every sort of trouble, both at home and abroad. To be sure, he is not without opponents, and who can think of Georg Brandes minus polemics? But even his worst antagonists must treat him with respect. Attacks like those of former days would no longer be tolerated. It is, perhaps, the general opinion now that the university made a mistake, principally to its own injury, when it failed to offer him the chair of aesthetics. This is something the university itself has admitted. Results have shown that the stir he made among the peaceful waters was for the best. All of the newer literary research here at home has had its fountain head in his 'Main Currents.' The younger generation hardly realizes how many mouldy dogmas and prejudices these have thrown to the winds. But neither the soft cushions of admiration nor the cold rays of disparagement have been able to either smother the fire that burns in Georg Brandes or to extinguish it."

As for the further tributes paid the Danish critic on that memorable evening in November of last year, the torch-light procession by the uni-

versity students was of a nature to show that the youth of Denmark are not unconscious of what the country owes the master of the craft. The spokesman for the Students' Association, addressing Brandes as the latter viewed the procession from the balcony, where a special company had assembled, declared that the young people came to him with flaming torches to bring him their thanks for the light that he, Brandes, had lit at that time in the long ago when everything seemed dark and somber. But it was he who lifted high the torch of honor so that all could see that the mystery of life was not what it seemed to be. A time came when the sun broke through the mist and all desired to know the truth. In the front rank stood Georg Brandes pointing the way, until now once more the light had become obscured and brother was fighting brother.

"We appeal to you to once more be with us," spoke the leader for the Students' Association. "Be our standard bearer of light against the darkness!"

Georg Brandes replied: "For seven years the torches of war have been swung over the earth and laid low mankind and the work of man. The youths of the nations were exposed to that fire

which in the form of shot and shell tore them limb by limb, or as poison gas cut through bone and marrow.

"But your torches are the torches of peace. They produce light without burning. The fire in your hands is the encouraging symbol of liberty, for without light there is no freedom. But very often the word freedom is but a false pretext for the right to oppress and exploit. Never were there so many interdictions as now. Force and compulsion assert themselves in the name of virtue, disguised as protection, and sometimes in the name of revolution.

"Enlightenment and liberty are the two faces of the goddess of fredom which she, the double-headed genius, turns toward us. Fire is to us the symbol of them both. When the sun shines we scarcely notice the fire, but in the darkness that now surrounds us we perceive even the faintest spark. From such a fire can come conflagration, but also masterpieces.

"The smoking torch is as the holy, luminous flame lifted against the two great partners; the light extinguishers and the incendiaries; statesmen that use fine words but are without talent, and fanatics full of hate. Stand on your guard against both. Protect the light against extinc-

tion, as well as against misuse. Your torches are representative of youth. Prometheus stole the fire from heaven to give humanity its hope.

"Shortly your torches will be converted into a bonfire. In such a fire were thrust those great proclaimers of light and truth, Johan Huss, Calvette, Giordano Bruno and many others. But over such a pyre there hovers also the bird Phoenix which lifts itself high on its wings of gold and purple. Thus ideas are reborn, with certain intervals; reborn and renewed in your youth."

CHAPTER III

MAIN CURRENTS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

WITH the entrance of the new century, Brandes was asked his opinion as to what he considered was in store for the newcomer with regard to literary development and its concomitants. The answer was characteristic of the man and his methods. As the author of "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature" it was presupposed that no greater authority on the subject could be had. And yet Brandes replied: "I am not fit to be a prophet. Existence is to be viewed from so many angles that it is extremely difficult to predict what the future, even the nearest future, has in store. In literature, the individual may, perhaps, develop himself to a greater extent than ever before, so that it becomes more and more difficult to point to groups.

"Nevertheless, intellectual currents are bound to appear. The past shows us many such; the rebirth of the visualization of Greco-Roman an-

tiquity and art was such a general movement. Humanism, the Reformation, classicism, writings aiming at the instilling of knowledge, romanticism, were currents that found ability and power lending their service in many lands.

"Having ruled for half a century (1850 to 1900), romanticism holds the record in point of time and no other current has been able to equal it. Realism may come nearest, but in so many forms that it must be classed under that other heading. As for symbolism, it has only made itself felt in the narrower domain of lyric poetry.

"What I might venture to say is something like this : It is unthinkable that realism has played its last card. Whether it appears as a searching of the soul, or the picturing of morals or as representing mass sentiment or a mere telling of events, realism always will flourish under changing names. It may be said with certainty that the return to the churchly point of view, whether expressed by Huysmans and Bourget in France, or by Johannes Jörgensen in Denmark, and partly by Strindberg and Garborg elsewhere in Scandinavia, this returning is nothing more than a ripple on the surface; not the damning of the stream.

"It is very likely that unfettered, imaginative art will maintain itself alongside the study of the realistic, and it would be the essence of narrowness to see in this any intellectual retrogression.

"Since different personalities find themselves attracted by different periods it is likewise plausible that historical art will be able to thrive next to the art that reproduces the present. The development of historical research and history writing will probably result in authors following in the footsteps of historians. Any direct awakening of the past will hardly take place through such an art. The writer can never give off anything but his own individuality. But there are those who find their fullest expression in utterances masked by the past.

"As the literature of the future as well as all future art necessarily will concern a much larger public than in the past, and confront a public which modern democracy has inspired with a craving for knowledge and for art, popular literature and popular dramatics, novels and comedies, strongly colored by the political and social life, will unfold and flourish to a degree heretofore unknown. In contrast to this out and out popular art-world, a literature appealing to the

most refined and exacting reading circle undoubtedly will also thrive."

Written some fifteen years subsequently to his "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature," Georg Brandes virtually predicted for the twentieth century a literature that the first two decades have made a fact. As for the factors that inspired him to engage in that monumental work, it was not the earlier lecture form that alone spurred him to the task. His real intent he tells in the introduction to the first volume, as follows:

"It is my purpose in the present work to trace the outlines of a psychology of the first half of the nineteenth century by means of a study of certain main groups and movements in European literature. The stormy year of 1848, a historical turning point, and hence a break, is the limit to which I purpose following the process of development. The period between the beginning and the middle of the century presents a spectacle of many scattered and apparently disconnected literary efforts and phenomena. But he who carefully observes the main currents of literature perceives that their great movements are all conditioned by one great leading movement with its ebb and flow, namely, the gradual fading

away and disappearance of the ideas and feelings of the preceding century and the return of the idea of progress in new, ever higher-mounting waves.

"The central subject of this work, then, is the reaction in the first decades of the nineteenth century against the literature of the eighteenth and the vanquishment of that reaction. This historic incident is of European interest, and can only be understood by a comparative study of European literature. The comparative view possesses the double advantage of bringing foreign literature so near to us that we can assimilate it, and of removing our own until we are enabled to see it in its true perspective. . . .

"Literary history is, in its profoundest significance, psychology, the study of the soul, its history. A book which belongs to the literature of a nation, be it romance, drama, or historical work, is a gallery of character portraits, a storehouse of feelings and thoughts. The more momentous the feelings, the greater, clearer, and wider the thoughts, the more remarkable and at the same time representative the characters, so much the greater is the historical value of the book, so much more clearly does it reveal to us

what was really happening in men's minds in a given country at a given period."

The six volumes of "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature" divide themselves into "The Emigrant Literature," "The Romantic School in Germany," "The Reaction in France," "Naturalism in England," "The Romantic School in France," and "Young Germany." The reading of this sixth volume brings forcibly to mind what might have been Germany's fate in later years had the influence of the French revolution of July, 1830, been more far-reaching in its effect on the Germans of that day. As for the year 1848, it is a year of great spiritual significance, writes Brandes. "After it men feel and think and write quite otherwise than they did before it. In literature it is the red line of separation that divides our century and marks the beginning of a new era. It was a year of jubilee, like that instituted by the old Hebrew law, that fiftieth year, in which the trumpet was to be sounded throughout the land, which was to be hallowed, and in which liberty was to be proclaimed 'throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof' (Lev. xxv. 8, etc.). This year, with its quick heartbeat, its all-subduing youthful ardor, was like that Bible

year of jubilee, a year of returning into possession, a year of redemption in which 'they that had been sold were redeemed again.' To this day we imbibe youthful enthusiasm from its day of March and learn important lessons from its day of November."

Terminating, as the "Main Currents" do, with the year 1848, Georg Brandes pushes his analysis beyond that period, almost to the time when he began his series of lectures at the Copenhagen University. Innumerable monographs subsequent to the completion of the main work treat intimately of the literary characters that ranked high during the last century. As for the result achieved, Brandes affirms that "it is self-evident that the standpoint here adopted is a personal one. . . . Regarded impersonally, the literature of a half-century is nothing but a chaos of hundreds of thousands of books in many languages. . . . It has been the author's aim to do justice, as far as in him lay, to every single person and phenomena he has described. . . . The power which has grouped, contrasted, thrown into relief or suppressed, lengthened or shortened, placed in full light, in half light, or in shadow, is none other than that never entirely conscious power to which we usually give the name of art."

CHAPTER IV

NEW LIGHT ON THE CHARACTERS OF SHYLOCK AND HAMLET

IN considering Georg Brandes' "William "Shakespeare, a Critical Study," two characters are of such outstanding importance to the psychological aspects of the Brandes viewpoint that they may be looked upon as fairly indicative of the Danish writer's intention in adding to existing Shakespeareana. Certainly, in the case of Hamlet it is not to be forgotten that, himself a Dane, Brandes can claim kinship to a personality which, born of fancy or not, had Scandinavia for environment. With regard to the "Merchant of Venice," the character of Shylock is here analyzed by one derived from the same race. The Jewish ancestry of Georg Brandes, of which more is to be said later, nevertheless is not to be considered as responsible for whatever favorable estimate he is rendering of Shylock as against most of the stage representations of to-day.

Controversy has not yet ceased as to how Shylock should be presented. Brandes says that

what is most surprising to him is the instinct of genius which Shakespeare has seized upon and reproduced racial characteristics and emphasized what is peculiarly Jewish in Shylock's culture.

"While Marlowe, according to custom, made his Barabas revel in mythological similes," Brandes writes, "Shakespeare indicates that Shylock's culture is founded entirely on the Old Testament, and makes commerce his only point of contact with the civilization of later times. All his parallels are drawn from the Patriarchs and the Prophets. With what unction he speaks when he justifies himself by the example of Jacob! His own race is always 'our sacred nation,' and he feels that 'the curse has never fallen upon it' until his daughter fled with his treasures. Jewish, too, is Shylock's insistence on the letter of the law, his reliance upon statutory rights, which are, indeed, the only rights society allows him, and the partly instinctive, partly defiant, restriction of his moral ideas to the principle of retribution."

Brandes finds that the names of the Jews and Jewesses who appear in "The Merchant of Venice," Shakespeare has taken from the Old Testament. "We find in Genesis (x. 24)," he

writes, "the name Salah (Hebrew Schelach; at that time appearing as the name of a Maronite from Lebanon: Shialac) out of which Shakespeare has made Shylock; and in Genesis (xi. 29) there occurs the name Isach (she who looks out, who spies), spelt Jessica, the girl whom Shylock accuses of a fondness for 'clambering up to casements' and 'thrusting her head into the public street' to see the maskers pass."

Shakespeare's audiences were familiar with several versions of the story of the Jew who relentlessly demanded the pound of flesh pledged to him by his Christian debtor, and was at last sent empty and baffled away, and even forced to become a Christian. But the English public had no acquaintance with the Jews except in books and on the stage. From 1290 until the middle of the seventeenth century they were entirely excluded from England. Every prejudice against them was free to flourish.

"But did Shakespeare share in these religious prejudices?" asks Georg Brandes. He answers his own question by stating that in his opinion Shakespeare was very slightly affected by them, if at all. "Had he made a more undisguised effort to place himself at Shylock's standpoint," he says, "the censorship, on the one hand, would

have intervened, while on the other hand the public would have been bewildered and alienated. It is quite in the spirit of the age that Shylock should suffer the punishment that befalls him. To pay him out for his stiffnecked vengefulness, he is mulcted not only of the sum he lent Antonio, but of half of his fortune, and is finally, like Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta,' compelled to change his religion."

Brandes considers it an astonishing fact that, in spite of all other conditions, Shakespeare succeeded in imparting to Shylock so much right in wrong, so much humanity in inhumanity. On this point he says:

"The spectator sees clearly that, with the treatment he has suffered, he could not but become what he is. Shakespeare has rejected the notion of the atheistically-minded Marlowe that the Jew hates Christianity and despises Christians as fiercer money-grabbers than himself. With his calm humanity, Shakespeare makes Shylock's hardness and cruelty result at once from his passionate nature and his abnormal position; so that, in spite of everything he has come to appear in the eyes of later times as a sort of tragic symbol of the degradation and vengefulness of an oppressed race. There is not

in all Shakespeare a greater example of trenchant and incontrovertible eloquence than Shakespeare's famous speech (iii. I): 'I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?' etc."

No contrast would seem greater than the personality of Shylock as compared with the character of Hamlet. Georg Brandes declares that the mentality of the Melancholy Dane visualizes the mind of Shakespeare at the time he wrote the drama, for here the poet "puts the cloak of motley on his own shoulders. He well understood the value of indirect expression, and the fact that wisdom cuts deeper when thrown out as folly."

On his first and only visit to the United States, in the spring of 1914, Georg Brandes, in lecturing before special audiences, featured Hamlet as the one of Shakespeare's characters most familiar to Americans. There was, of course, the double interest that here was one famous Dane interpreting another Dane whose fame was world-wide, even though Shakespeare drew largely on his imagination in his creation of Hamlet.

"Shakespeare lived all of Hamlet's experi-

ences," declared Brandes. "Shortly before writing the drama his father had died—not by assassination, it is true; and his mother had not degraded herself—but the patrons of his youth, Southampton and Essex, had died; the woman he loved had proved false and heartless, a friend had conspired against him with this woman, and his prospects of winning the poet's wreath were slim. At first he was submissive under these misfortunes. He was stunned. Later he took his revenge incognito through the scathing invective of Hamlet. He makes Hamlet speak not as a prince but, as when he speaks of the 'oppressor's scorn' and the 'proud man's contumely,' in the manner of one who has been outraged by the sight of stupidity lording it in high places. The bright view of life which characterized his youth was overcast, and his disappointment voices itself in Hamlet's expression of weariness of life."

CHAPTER V

FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN TO FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

AS Shakespeare gave expression to much within his own self through the portrayal of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, so Brandes reveals not a little of his individuality by his analysis of Hamlet's idiosyncracies. It is true that we must go to the last of his great works, "Michelangelo Buonarroti," for an estimate as to how much Brandes put of himself in any of his books. That he has much in common with Hamlet in his way of looking at mankind, there can be no doubt. How often in the past, as he broke lance after lance with conservatism, has he not shown his detestation for "the stupidity lording it in high places." Through all his writings occurs this word "stupidity" as a reproach because of mankind's refusal to think for itself and use common sense.

His literary career extending over more than sixty years, Georg Brandes has at times been

exposed to much adverse criticism because of his facility for producing the one large work after another. It is, of course, impossible to expect that all that he has written is of equal merit. At the same time, few writers of to-day equal him on the score of uniform perfection when taken in connection with such vast production. But it would be nothing less than a miracle if here and there slight inaccuracies did not slip in. And as Brandes himself does not believe in miracles, he is the first to admit that discrepancies are part of human nature. The Brandes way of writing history is such that license is required in describing events of the past. But there can be no quarrel with such literature as makes the great historic characters rise from the tomb, endowed with those very faculties that made them conspicuous while among the living.

Halting between Brandes' "Shakespeare" and the appearance of his "Wolfgang Goethe," in 1915, the intervening years give opportunity for considering the vast number of works before the subsequent Voltaire, Julius Caesar and Michelangelo. However casual an estimate of Georg Brandes' achievements, some mention must be made of books each and every one of which constitute steps in his career. Only in that way can

his versatility be brought home to those seeking light on the importance of this Danish critic.

Among the earlier monographs dealing with Scandinavian authors, Georg Brandes' estimate of Henrik Ibsen and Björnstjerne Björnson long since established their right to unique distinction. Brandes, as a matter of record, was largely responsible for the fact that Ibsen took a firm stand for those ideals that showed him as the master craftsman in dramatic art. As for Björnson, in spite of certain differences in temperament and artistic perception, the friendship that existed between the Norwegian writer and the Danish critic continued through the lifetime of the former to the mutual benefit of both. It is, further, a well known fact that August Strindberg would not so soon have gained his literary reputation had not Brandes singled out this Swedish genius for what he was, and voiced his appreciation of his unquestioned talent.

As for the influence of Georg Brandes on Scandinavian literature as a whole, we shall have to come to that later. For the present, however, it may have its particular purpose to say that with regard to Hans Christian Andersen no native Dane nor foreigner has ever written more entertainingly about the Danish fairy-tale

writer. Here is the way Brandes sums up Hans Andersen: "One of the marks of writers of genius is almost always the necessity for constantly creating, and we are surprised not only to see how excellent has been their production in its best manifestations, but also to note its continuance and abundance. All the great creators who have not been prevented by illness or arrested by premature death have left quantities of work.

"In the 'Ugly Duckling,' one of his most exquisite stories, there is the quintessence of Andersen's entire life-melancholy, humour, martyrdom, triumph—and of his whole nature; the gift of observation and the sparkling intellect which he used to avenge himself upon folly and wickedness, the varied faculties which constituted his genius. This genius formed his happiness, which was deep and essential, in ways different from external triumphs."

Brandes, then, once more referring to an author's productivity, adds that "for posterity the point in question is by no means to have written much, even though all might be excellent. It is impossible with such an amount of luggage to pass through the needle's eye that leads into the realm of immortality. The essential thing is to

have produced one single little work which is immortal, a thing that is never forgotten because its form is so faultless and so final that nothing can impair it. 'Don Quixote,' 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'Manon Lescaut,' in universal literature are masterpieces of this sort. Their authors have written a series of other books which are known only in their native countries and by very few persons. A collection of the best 'Tales' of Andersen is worthy to rank among the number of the few unique books which mankind will never forget."

It is a far cry from the simplicity and poetic inspiration of a Hans Christian Andersen to the Friedrich Nietzsche whose philosophy became a bone of contention for scholars everywhere after Georg Brandes presented him to the world as a genius of a sort whose doctrines should not be passed by without serious study. Brandes' monograph on Nietzsche, however, does not show the Danish critic a disciple of this German mystery-man. In answer to those who at one time charged him with taking example from Nietzsche's teachings he said that when he became acquainted with Nietzsche he was long past the age at which it is possible to change one's fundamental view of life.

"I maintained many years ago," writes Brandes, "that my first thought with regard to a philosophical book was by no means to ask whether what it contains is right or wrong but to go straight through the book to the man behind it. And my first question is this: What is the value of this man, is he interesting or not? If he is, then his books are undoubtedly worth knowing."

In August, 1900, after the death of Nietzsche, Brandes wrote about him: "To be able to explain Nietzsche's rapid and overwhelming triumph, one would want the key to the secret of the psychological life of our time. He bewitched the age, though he seems opposed to all its instincts. The age is ultra-democratic; he won its favors as an aristocrat. The age is borne on a rising wave of religious reaction; he conquered with his pronounced irreligion. The age is struggling with social questions of the most difficult and far-reaching kind; he, the thinker of the age, left all these questions on one side as of secondary importance. He was an enemy of the humanitarianism of the present day and its doctrine of happiness. . . . For all that, he must in some hidden way have been in accord with much that is fermenting in our time,

otherwise it would not have adopted him as it has done."

Apart from the great men who centered entire epochs, as in the case of Goethe, Voltaire, Caesar, Michelangelo, and who he treated separately in those monumental works that now stand to his credit, Georg Brandes' portrait gallery includes many other important personalities whose monographs are conspicuous examples of his literary craftsmanship. Anatole France, Disraeli, Napoleon, Lassalle, Heine, to mention only a few of the intimate sketches by his hand, in each and every instance the execution carries that sure touch that only an artist has at his command. His "Autobiography" reveals Brandes as man and litterateur and constitutes a most illuminating chapter in his history. His writings on the world war; on Russia and Poland, both as to their cultural status and their relations to the Jews, the Schleswig-Holstein question, and Brandes' neutral attitude during the conflict, all this bears directly on his achievement and aim in life.

CHAPTER VI

BRANDES' SEARCHING ANALYSIS OF THE FAUST IN "WOLFGANG GOETHE"

WHILE Brandes' "Wolfgang Goethe" did not make its appearance until 1915, many years before he had written extensively on the subject of the German poet who so greatly influenced his whole literary activity. The character of Faust, in particular, proved fascinating material and an inspiration.

"With Faust, dating from 1775," he writes, "Goethe reached an altitude as poet which inscribes his name alongside the greatest men on the globe. These pages contain a luxurious mass of feeling, wit, fantasy and common sense; such abounding melody and so superior an art in the sketching of three very human and symbolical figures that all criticism of lesser things dissolves itself into devotion-like admiration. This is written for all time. So long as the German language is understood it cannot be forgotten."

How Goethe was led by gradual stages to the

writing of Faust; how during an entire decade, and that ten of his best years—from his twenty-seventh to his thirty-seventh—he gave up his poetical activity to devote himself to managerial court service in Weimer, how Goethe's marvelous productivity was marked by lapses that stood in striking contract to what he accomplished, this and much more Brandes subjects to his penetrative analysis. At Weimar, Goethe wrote little more than topical verses, and for this reason, affirms Brandes, "his more important work lacked unity. He left them lying about too long. As a rule they are too heterogenous or poorly constructed. He constantly reverted to them, or added new material, or else he continued their completion when he had half forgotten the original idea with regard to the work.

"Without counting the unconnected scenes, 'Götz von Berlichingen' exists in three different forms. 'Iphigenia' was reworked five times. Wilhelm Meister's 'Apprenticeship' was left idle so long that the work was built upon another plan than the one on which it was conceived. We have it in two forms. Wilhelm Meister's 'Wanderings' was in no wise carried out according to any plan; it is merely a collection. And when we finally arrive at such a main work as 'Faust,'

which was drafted and laid aside, and taken up again and again, until its completion stretches across more than sixty years, then it is difficult to say how many 'Fausts' are contained; one 'Faust' it is not. The whole is made up of a series of geological stratums, and these layers sometimes lie, as when rock formations tumble together, intermixed with each other."

Touching the genesis of "Faust," Brandes then says: "The young Wolfgang Goethe wrote out a dramatic fragment, the idea for which appears to have come to him at the close of 1773, and which he elaborated between October, 1774, and the beginning of 1775, so far as it concerned the larger part, and during the late summer and the fall of 1775 as it pertained to the lesser half. He then left the writing as it was until, in 1788, during his second stay in Rome, he once more took hold and tried to possess himself of the spirit and atmosphere that surrounded the material in his younger days. He first published it in 1790 as a 'Fragment.'"

With all this, the Danish critic declares that what Goethe prepared in the fall of 1775 was, however careless its treatment, the finest poetry written during the past 180 years, a poetry that Goethe himself never surpassed. And the rea-

son why these pages are "like asbestos, to be destroyed neither by fire, nor water, nor time," avers Brandes, is that in "Faust" Goethe attains to and penetrates the purely elementary in human nature.

On this point we read: "He here defines love and sentiment as those qualities first reveal themselves in the life of a young woman, inseparable as they are in the eternal simplicity, yet immovable and strong as granite rock. The contrasting figure is man, the investigator; one who thirsts after all-encompassing knowledge; who wants to learn the origin of existence, the power of nature, the whole of life's rich and secret contents. Goethe brings before this mortal a young woman who attracts and fascinates and yet fails to bind and hold him prisoner."

It was while in Leipzig, as a young student, that Goethe became acquainted with Auerbach's paintings which tell about the journeys and adventures of Faust and Mephistopheles. In Frankfort, where he hesitated between the pious teachings of Frau von Kettenberg and the incredulity of the period due to the influence of Voltaire, Goethe had busied himself with alchemy and cabalistics. He had even tried his hand at being a magician. But it was his stay in Strass-

burg that proved decisive in that the suffering Herder supplied him with the outline of Faust. The constant satire and sarcasm as employed by Herder furnished Goethe the clue to his Mephistopheles, the sketching being made more complete later under the influence of Merck. The Gretchen ideal Goethe obtained from Friederike, but Gretchen's name was a transplantation, referring to the young girl with whom the fifteen-year-old boy had been in love.

Georg Brandes is of the opinion that Goethe should stand before Europe and America as not only the most profound and the most comprehensive poetic power, but upon the whole as the richest equipped individual appearing in literature since the days of the Renaissance. And yet for many years "Faust" was looked upon askance. Both Benjamin Constant and Madame de Stael criticised the work adversely. "But," comments Brandes, "among the numerous Frenchmen who after Goethe's death felt themselves under the spell of his mental greatness and lifted up by his superiority above his own time, it suffices to name the two greatest: Ernest Renan, who is related to Goethe by virtue of his own agility of mind which encompasses history, and by his equally developed taste for primitive and refined sensi-

bility; and next, Hippolyte Taine, who is a descendant of Goethe by reason of his rare ability to understand, his blending of spiritual and natural knowledge, his deep and firmly rooted enthusiasm for art in nature."

As already told, the influence of Goethe on Georg Brandes is of long standing, and many years ago he began to write interestingly about the great German poet-philosopher. According to his own words, however, it remained for the world war to afford him the chance to prepare the two-volume work which he completed in 1915 because, as he said, he was prevented from spending his time in travel and settled down to a task that found him fully equipped to treat of Goethe in a manner that scholars everywhere pronounce fully worthy the subject and the author.

Georg Brandes' appreciation of Goethe may be summed up as follows: "He was the greatest poetical genius of the last three centuries. After a considerable period of misjudgment and misunderstanding he has become the national god for the Germanic race. Not even Luther, Lessing and Schiller; not even Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner; not Kant and Schopenhauer, or even Frederick the Great or Bismarck are

names approaching his. In one personality he is to Germany what Leonardo, Michelangelo and Galilei are to Italy; Molière, Racine, Voltaire to France; Shakespeare, Newton and Darwin to England; Linne, Tegner and Berzelius to Sweden. He is the encompassing expression for the nation's glory and its highest culture."

CHAPTER VII

FRANÇOIS DE VOLTAIRE AND THE INFLUENCE OF FRENCH CULTURE

SHORTLY after the Goethe, Georg Brandes published his big book on Voltaire. Even more so than Germany, France and French literature have influenced the Danish writer from his earliest youth. On the occasion of the half-century anniversary of his first book, when asked why he had chosen Voltaire as his subject for exhaustive analysis, Brandes replied: "I am fond of the eighteenth century. It has tempted me to describe Voltaire, as the center of the France of his time—through a mass of personalities and works. If my book about Goethe contains 700 characters, twice as many appear here. For this reason the Voltaire will be half again as big as the Goethe book.

"But Voltaire is not only the central point in the France of the eighteenth century. Alone his exile across the Channel gives opportunity for describing England of that period. His book

about Charles XII is Sweden of the time; a country that he carefully explored. His relations with Frederick the Great; to the latter's sister, the Margravine of Beyruth, and a large number of small German princes, together with his long stay in Prussia, furnishes a chance to discuss the Germany of those days. His residence at the court of King Stanislaus shows the conditions in Lorraine, and as Stanislaus formerly was King of Poland, Voltaire is also familiar with affairs there. His work about Peter the Great and his friendship for Catherine II gives occasion for looking into contemporary Russia. His life, then, encompasses much of great variety.

"I shall attempt to show him that justice which the first half of the dull nineteenth century denied him, without by any means forgetting his limitations. As subject matter Voltaire is fresh; outside France very little has been written about him, and in France, nothing that is very good."

If, however, Voltaire attained during his lifetime a much greater sway than Goethe while he lived, the reason, avers Brandes, is to be found in the fact that not only was the French satirist the redoubtable conqueror of superstition, but he wrote in a language that was highly developed

and constituted the language used at court everywhere.

"It was the language of diplomats," affirms Brandes, "it was the most adaptable, flexible and elegant of all. It was a language alike adapted to humor and pathos, to the concealment or revelation of thought. He developed it in metrical style, in the sort of poetry of which he was complete master—the epigram—and made it the organ for the finest wit and the keenest sense known to reasoning man. And in his prose Voltaire brought French up to a matchless height of boldness and firmness, strength and subtlety."

But poet, in the sense that Goethe was a poet, Voltaire never succeeded in becoming, Brandes declares. He was a dramatist who, like Euripides of old, made the tragedy the organ for new ideas. He was a pamphleteer who could arouse a whirlwind of laughter and was therefore to be feared. He was the author of short philosophic novels that penetrated everywhere and won the minds of men through an appeal to reason. And he was, what Goethe never could be, emphasizes Brandes, a fighter. He was the champion of tolerance, the lover of freedom, the spokesman of justice. He made the mighty tremble through the power of his pen.

"We are forced to concede one small personal superiority to Voltaire," Brandes continues in making his comparison with Goethe; "his position in and atttitude toward the society of royalty was commendable. From his very youth he had been wont to associate with lords and ladies of high degree. Fully aware of his intellectual endowments and acquirements he considered himself their equal. That gave his position a saving grace. He moved about among them with complete ease; he never appeared subservient other than in a purely formal way demanded by the etiquette of the age.

"It is true that his letters to kings, empresses and other lofty personages rarely fail to flatter. But they flattered him first. And his flattery is so elegant and witty that to read it is a distinct pleasure. Think of his numerous epistles to Frederick the Great! They flatter, but back of them lie self-assertion and criticism, sharp caustic and corrective."

Goethe, on the other hand, we read further, "as the son of a civilian and the comrade of an unimportant duke, had the German innate respect for the social hierarchy developed to such a high degree that it gave him unequivocal

pleasure to envelop himself with all the formulae of subserviency prescribed by the court."

Whether or not Georg Brandes ever contemplated a life of Napoleon of equal proportion with his Shakespeare, Goethe or Voltaire, the fact remains that in his monograph on the Corsican superman he compressed within a small space an immense amount of matter that gives a most interesting insight into a career that has, perhaps, never been duplicated. This monograph was also written during the war, and on the occasion of the Napoleonic centenary. Relative to the man whose rule was short but who accomplished so much, Brandes writes: "It is exactly one hundred years since the close of the Napoleonic era with the campaign in France, in 1814, and the battle of Waterloo, 1815. Seldom has so short a span been so eventful and unforgettable. . .

"As late as the beginning of October, 1812, Napoleon stood in Moscow as the decisive master of the European continent. Personally he had as yet met no defeat. He was forty-three years old, Emperor of France and King of Italy. He had married the daughter of an emperor and had received an heir to the throne. His dominion reached from the coast of Holland to the Ionian

islands; from Danzig to the southernmost point of Italy. He ruled as autocrat over hundreds of millions of human beings."

Brandes advances the hypothesis that if Napoleon's adventure in Russia had not turned out a fiasco the Russian people themselves would have been the chief beneficiaries. For then the Russian serf would have been made free half a century before this actually happened. Had Napoleon been able to obtain a real foothold in that country, the Danish critic emphasizes, the badly governed Russian nation would have been turned into paths of liberty and prosperity like those enjoyed by the French. "But the Russian breakdown was the decisive thrust against the power of Napoleon. One year and a half after his stay in Moscow his domain was reduced to the Island of Elba. A year later he was once more a prisoner on St. Helena. The structure of his might fell to the ground like a house of cards."

CHAPTER VIII

NEW ESTIMATE OF JULIUS CAESAR AS RULER AND CITIZEN

THERE must have been something in the very atmosphere of 1917 which led Georg Brandes to concentrate on the career of Julius Caesar and bring to completion a work that in an equal degree with the preceding volumes testified to his remarkable capacity for summoning from out the past great historical characters and investing them with the spirit of the present. Many historians have concerned themselves with the Roman dictator without coming to an agreement as to his real worth to his generation and after. Brandes' "Cajus Julius Caesar" in many respects differs from what other noted writers have had to say on the subject. The Danish critic certainly takes exception to Shakespeare's drama of that name where Brutus is exalted and the character of Caesar made merely a foil to the other's outstanding importance in the play.

Brandes' Caesar is conspicuous for the fact

that it throws into strong relief the dominant characteristics of the great Roman as ruler and citizen. As for Shakespeare's interpretation, we read that it was because of his lack of "historical and classical culture that the incomparable figure of Caesar left him unmoved. He depressed and debased that figure to make room for the development of the central figure—Marcus Brutus —who, following Plutarch's idealizing example, he depicted as a stoic of almost flawless nobility."

In "Cajus Julius Caesar," Brandes' cosmopolitanism comes into full flower. He reveals his purpose as a publicist to whom literature is a means for reaching the ear of the public. Generation upon generation, he writes, has been educated to see in Caesar the representative of lust of power, in Brutus the hero of freedom. It may have suited the purpose of Shakespeare to have Mark Anthony play the role he did. But with Froude, Brandes brushes aside whatever good traits Marcus Brutus may have possessed, for he lost all claims to consideration after he delivered the fatal thrust which robbed the world of Caesar. "That murder, committed during the forenoon of the fifteenth day of March, 44 B. C., by sixty conspirators making twenty-three dagger thrusts, is perhaps the most conspicuous

monument that history possesses relative to human stupidity in the guise of so-called idealism; of human meanness, ingratitude, rapacity and coarseness masquerading as love of liberty. A band of jealous wretches, lusting after power, lacerated with their long daggers the most genial personality of Roman antiquity. And it is the crowning disgrace that during the following 2,000 years, because of mankind's incomprehensible stupidity, Brutus is placed alongside Caesar, yes, is esteemed as even greater and worthier than he."

Brandes then speaks of the many great things accomplished by Caesar. To begin with, he solved a problem that the centuries had failed to solve, the agrarian problem, the greatest question of that day, as it still remains the greatest issue of the present. Caesar gave relief to provinces staggering under the burden imposed by Roman money men. He gave independence to entire provinces by presenting them with Latin citizenship, sometimes Roman. He decreased the size of the Roman proletariat and fought poverty by creating Roman colonies that became cradles for intelligence and from where civilizing influences could go forth among the barbarians of the period.

"The conquest of Gaul, as completed by Caesar," we read further, "is a masterpiece in accomplishment that never can be forgotten. There is not the slightest doubt that Caesar is the creator of the later-day French nation. Without him the Gauls would perhaps a second time have thrown themselves over Italy and destroyed the high civilization of the antique world. Just as Sertorious in his own time romanized Celt-Tiberian Spain, Caesar laid the foundation for making Gaul Roman. Those fear-inspiring enemies of the Roman empire, who three centuries and a half before had conquered Rome and humiliated the people, of their own free will now renounce their religion, their customs, language, laws, even their names, in order to take on language, names, laws, customs, as these were introduced by Caesar. The influence on the progress of civilization that Caesar thus effected is beyond estimate."

Brandes has no quarrel with those who cling to Shakespeare's interpretation of the great Roman on the score of the poetic beauty of the drama or mastery in delineation. Himself far from being a historian in the strictest sense of the word, yet it is the historic viewpoint that he attacks. In fact, Shakespeare, according to

Georg Brandes, did wonders with the material available to him. But the Danish critic set out to show Julius Caesar in what he considered his true colors. Take Caesar's speech in the Senate, when the conspiracy of Catiline is being discussed. How proud the delivery, exclaims Brandes. How gentle the point of view, what wisdom! How contrasting to all of Cicero's, the man of rhetoric whose harmonious style expressed nothing more than an inner void.

In his book on Shakespeare, to digress from the main work on Caesar, Brandes draws this interesting picture in contrast: "As Shakespeare conceives the situation, the Republic which Caesar overthrew might have continued but for him and it was a criminal act on his part to destroy it. But the old aristocratic republic had already fallen to pieces when Caesar welded its fragments into a new monarchy. Sheer lawlessness reigned in Rome. The populace was such as even the rabble of our own time can give no conception of; not the brainless mob, for the most part tame, only now and then running wild through mere stupidity, which in Shakespeare listens to the orations over Caesar's body and tears Cinna to pieces; but a populace whose innumerable hordes consisted mainly of slaves, to-

gether with the thousands of foreigners from all the three continents: Phrygians from Asia, Negroes from Africa, Iberians and Celts from Spain and France, who flocked together in the capital of the world."

This very closely resembles what Momsen wrote in 1857: "If we try to conceive to ourselves a London with the slave population of New Orleans, with the police of Constantinople, with the non-industrial character of modern Rome, and agitated after the fashion of the Paris of 1848, we shall acquire an approximate idea of the republican glory, the departure of which Cicero and his associates in their sulky letters deplore."

CHAPTER IX

BRANDES SELF-REVEALED IN MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI

WHEN a noted writer attains the advanced age of eighty, and a new large work by him makes its appearance, it is but natural that the question arises: In what way does such a contribution to world-literature compare with what already stands to the credit of such a writer?

Georg Brandes' "Michelangelo Buonarroti" is the most recent of his larger works. In all human probability it will have no successor on the score of equal size or preparation. It is scarcely conceivable that an octogenarian can set himself to again master the vast amount of detail work that went to the making of this Michelangelo. When to this is added that this study of the great Florentine sculptor-painter afforded the Danish critic an opportunity for autobiographical reflection, as he pictured the career of one of the world's most famous personalities, it is with more than ordinary interest that the reader approaches these monumental volumes.

Characteristic of the style employed by Brandes in this work is the following: "When to-day one visits Florence for the first time, it is customary, in order to obtain a good view of the city, to take a drive along the Via dei Colli, the road which twists in and out like some broad winding stairway, up the hills where Michelangelo built fortifications for the defense of Florence. If the month is May, the tour is through a veritable flower garden (which gives Florence its name) through an atmosphere fragrant with the scent of thousands upon thousands of full-blown roses; and at each turn of the road the vista reveals more of the fine and rarified landscape through which winds the Arno River, and in which, like some mosaic flower in the bottom of a bowl, Florence appears, with its cathedral, with Giotto's bell-tower in black and white marble, with its palaces, equally suited for defense and festival, and with its wonderfully decorated churches and cloisters."

On this hill, a great monument in honor of the four hundredth anniversary of Michelangelo's birth was unveiled in 1875. Here Michelangelo's David in bronze rests high upon its marble base, and from it extend reclining bronze figures, re-

plicas of the Morning, Day, Evening and Night in the Sacristy of San Lorenzo.

No less picturesque is Brandes' reference to the eternal city, for the traveler who visits Rome after Florence will see "far in the distance, hovering above the world-city, the dome of San Pietro, the most beautiful on earth—far more beautiful than either of its forerunners, the domes of the Pantheon and of Santa Maria del Fiore. Michelangelo was past eighty when he designed this and superintended the making of a wooden model. Though he never saw the execution of his plan, the majestic curved line of the world's largest and highest dome is due entirely to the master himself. Guided solely by unerring instinct—as it were, unconsciously—Michelangelo here solved a problem that his conscious mind could scarcely have comprehended; for it was beyond the mathematics of that time. We must explain the secret of this structure's unique effect by the complete unity of its plastic and mechanical beauty."

At a first glance, then, it is seen that in Florence it is Michelangelo the sculptor and that in Rome it is Michelangelo the architect. "But," continues Brandes, "when we are in Rome itself we find that it is as painter that the master proves his superiority. In a single building, the

Sistine Chapel, he carries out the most important and all-encompassing task of his life, the decoration of the ceiling, a welling forth of the youthful yet virile quality characteristic of all his work; and a generation later, his painting of the Last Judgment, witnessing to artistic perfection beyond comparison. We know at a first glance that this artist's crowning aim is the sublime; he seeks to conquer by grandeur, not by emotion.

"There is in antique art a unity that excluded the individual. The Greek artist aimed in his work to forget personality. When we admire the beauty of the Parthenon frieze, we do not think of Phidias. The work speaks and the artist is silent.

"The art of the Renaissance, and especially that of Michelangelo, is different. His personal idiosyncracies reveal themselves throughout all his works; the pride of his soul, the untamed independence of his mind. He is more personal, not only than any artist of Greek antiquity, but than any other of the Italian Renaissance."

On what must have been one of his earliest visits to Italy, Georg Brandes came under the influence of the wonderful productions of Michelangelo, for in his book he has this striking

sentence: "In 1871, when for the first time I stepped within the Sistine Chapel, I said to myself: 'At last you are in the presence of that mind which of all mind-forces has struck deepest into your soul.' "

This explains only partly why Brandes has been able to present a picture of Michelangelo which involuntarily calls to mind the struggles for recognition that marked the earlier efforts of the noted Dane. It is for the reason that he himself underwent similar experiences, with envy and ignorance combining in an attempt to frustrate his purpose in life, that Brandes reveals his kinship to the Florentine master craftsman. Directly we shall hear more about this battle against traditional stupidity which, from youth to old age, Michelangelo's biographer had to fight that men might come to realize that their selfhood rests on seeking the light that alone redeems.

Romain Rolland writes of Michelangelo that he was "irresolute in art, in politics, in all his actions and in all his thoughts." Admitting something of this, Brandes strikes a much more positive note when he declares that Michelangelo, in spite of his mental struggles, aloofness and idiosyncracies, was pursuing one end, and then,

following up this assertion, he writes: "A life-work like his is unexplainable without his interminable and composite character as man, with its ability and weakness, and without the entire artistic and literary development of Italy in his time, without the history and art of Tuscany, without Lorenzo de Medici, without Bertoldo and the garden of San Marco.

"That which is fundamental in Michelangelo's art, then, is to be seen, first, in the relation which he bears to antiquity, that is, to the sculpture of the Romans and the imaginative world of the Greeks; and secondly, in the attitude which he himself assumed toward the Bible, especially the Old Testament, which seems completely to have filled his mind. Here, then, we find two influences which are fundamental—Hellas and Palestine. Hellas affects him because of the relics of antiquity which the soil of Italy has given forth—excavated works like the Discobolos, the torso of Hercules, the Laocoon, and innumerable carved stones. He is influenced by Palestine through the myths of creation, the prophets, Moses, the legend about the Flood, and finally through the stories about the Mother of Jesus and her Son, and the latter's sufferings and death."

Brandes asserts that three characteristics usually strike the modern beholder who, without preconceptions, finds himself before the art of Michelangelo. First, the manner in which nudity is presented, how the entire naked body is made to express individuality; secondly, Michelangelo's striving for the vast, taking that word in its double meaning of sublime and colossal; finally, the pathos in his art, with its overflowing energy and silent dignity.

"In all that he produced," Brandes comments, "he added the stamp of his own unquestioned superiority. The least of his sketches carry authority; subjectively free, lending to the plastic object his own mental strength, or fearlessness, or dignified elegance. The determining consideration with him was the inner pride of his soul. But though a votary of nature, he was anything but a realist, anything but an imitator of the existing, like the Florentines before him."

Relative to the religious elements that entered into Michelangelo's creations, it is the opinion of Brandes that he is at his best at the cross-road where Hellas meets in his consciousness with Palestine. That he was stubborn to a fault when decorating the ceiling in the Sistine Chapel is historically proved when considering his answer

to Pope Julius II, who desired the figures of the twelve Apostles made part of that work. Michelangelo practically eliminated the Christian element. On the other hand, his friendship for Vittoria Colonna provided a channel for the religious action that allowed the Renaissance to reach and partly possess him. With his penchant for exaltation, he became receptive to an influence that would have had no effect on Leonardo da Vinci; a contagion against which this great artist would have been immune.

Georg Brandes voices his pleasure that in spite of his friendship with Vittoria Collona, regardless of the fact that Michelangelo fell under the spell of the penitent religiosity of the time, he continued naively to place groups of nude bodies in his painting of the Last Judgment, to the indignation of cardinals and papal officials, who insisted on clothing them. Michelangelo did not allow his spiritual rebirth to interfere with his artistic conception where it concerned his reverence for the human form.

CHAPTER X

FLORENTINE MASTER-CRAFTSMAN AS SEEN BY DANISH CRITIC

AS is well known, two important presentments of Michelangelo are those by Vasari and Condivi, the latter being directly inspired by the ageing artist, with his odd, gruff mannerisms, who was jealous of his unconditioned originality and did not want to seem to owe anything to any teacher. At thirteen, Michelangelo had been taken by his father, who held out as long as he could against the son's desire to enter upon an artist's career, to Domenico Ghirlandajo, the best teacher of the art of painting that Florence possessed.

"About this time," writes Brandes, "Ghirlandajo was engaged on the frescoes in the choir of Santa Maria Novella, and made use of a number of his students as his assistants. Here, apparently, Michelangelo learned the main principles in fresco painting, so that when Julius II set him his great task, he could show such surprising skill.

"Since as an old man he bemoaned the fact that he had not at once been apprenticed to a sculptor, we have a right to believe that his place as a student of Ghirlandajo was not something to be readily given up. However stubbornly he may have maintained that sculpture was merely his avocation, it was not of his own volition that he left the painter's studio. The reason was that Lorenzo de Medici addressed himself to Ghirlandajo for the purpose of getting some students for a school of sculpture which he desired to establish in the garden of San Marco's cloister. Ghirlandajo chose Michelangelo and his friend Granacci."

After Michelangelo, we read, had set eyes upon the collection of sculpture belonging to the Medici he never returned to the painter's studio. The antique statues altogether enthralled him. As he wandered there in the shaded walks of San Marco, the boy had before him the masterpieces of the ancients, and he must have felt within him a strong desire to deal with marble. The stonecutters who were building walls and cutting ornaments for the newly established library helped him in his study by supplying him with a piece of marble and some tools with which

he made his earliest attempt at sculpture, the head of a faun.

"But it was Lorenzo himself who showed and explained to the boy his art treasures, his gems and coins," Brandes continues. "The youth became familiar with what the Florentine painters before him had achieved. The naive style that is now called Pre-Raphaelite, could not possibly appeal to him or to his generation, nor could the archaic style which captivated Thorvaldsen and his period. Michelangelo aimed at the perfect, and found it first in statues like the Torso, and later in the Laocoon. He had for these the deepest admiration. They released within him a creative desire for mastery in the presentation of the human body, or of life as a hopeless but energetic fight; the tragically sublime.

"Most important of all was the intellectual liberation that he experienced, together with his soaring faith in a platonic ideal, a joy in that nature which had been condemned for so long, and a passionate love for the human form, its miraculous construction, the wonderful play of muscles, its hidden mechanism, the whole body as an expression of grief and happiness, anger, suffering, action, repose."

Regarding Michelangelo's attitude toward the

other sex, Georg Brandes has much to say that is significant. According to the intellectual traditions of the time, it was customary to look upon heathen sibyls and Hebrew prophets as similar. Michelangelo's indifference to woman as a sex entity disappeared when she showed herself inspired, divinely spiritualized, as the sibyl was then believed to be. The prophet was to him an understood and beloved character, for in Michelangelo himself there was something prophetic. The pathos that dwelt within him had this quality, "and in it," Brandes declares, "he was kin to some of the chief characters of the Old Testament. But for all that, his intellect was of his own time, heathenish, Greco-Roman."

Like the art of the Egyptians, Brandes explains, "that of the Middle Ages was a culture art, determined by ecclesiastical domination. Whether it remains identified with the monotonous forms of the Byzantine, or gives itself over to the emotions, it presents saints of both sexes, whose long cloaks cover thin, loose, formless bodies. These beings appear as if ashamed of possessing bodies at all.

"The Renaissance, from the very first, appears as a violent reaction against this conception, and it nowhere finds a more emphatic ex-

pression than at the hands of Michelangelo. To him the nude body was the very crown of existence; not a sinful frame, but the visualization of beauty and the decisive and true subject for ideal art. In this reaction there may be something heathenish. Certainly, some ecclesiastical dignitaries were scandalized when the ceiling in the Chapel of the Holy Father was thus peopled with swarms of stark-naked youths. But this was no direct exposition of heathenism, nor was it an expression of aversion for Catholicism—it was only the purest enthusiasm for nature."

On the question of Michelangelo as the master-sculptor of all time, Georg Brandes points to the four figures representing Morning, Day, Evening and Night in the Sacristy of Lorenzo: "The overpowering originality of Michelangelo stands forth in the entirely new way employed in the grouping of these sepulchral figures. It was customary in that day to adorn the sarcophagus with allegories of the virtues. But the idea of a tomb evoked in Buonarroti the thought that all is transitory, all is perishable, and inspired in him the unfolding of the four figures that, combined, express Time, that which calls humanity to face life's troubles only to thrust it once more down into the grave.

"To his imagination time divided itself into four periods, and he saw these before him as human forms, ideals fraught with power, revealing in the position and inner contrast of each separate body a muscle construction that is always intent, always appears as if ready to take on movement. There they lie, sorrowing, groaning, convulsively drawing their limbs up under them, or tired unto death, loathing all that day and night has to give them.

"There is no solemnity about them. They are unaware that they have spectators. Their manner is that of inner unrest, or else contempt for man. To them there is no joy in the awakening to a new day, no delight in the noon of life, no sweet rest in sleep. One thing is common to them all: They suffer."

Even in the "Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel, says Brandes, the same tendency is manifest. The sorrowful and the fearful divert attention from the celestial. Those risen from the dead and lifted to eternal bliss appear no less terrified than the sinners cast from heaven into the abyss below.

A phase of Michelangelo's genius that the layman is not so likely to come in contact with as compared to his productions of sculpture and

paintings is his mastery as a draftsman. He was very fond of sketching children, but never that which is trivial.

"We may criticize him as sculptor, painter and architect for good and sufficient reasons," says Georg Brandes in referring to Michelangelo's sketches, "his dislike for the commonplace, that which is easily obtained, frequently made him seem grotesque in his grandeur. But with the pen, the chalk or the pencil in hand he is absolutely faultless and incomparable. . . . Without hesitation we can say that there has never gone forth from his hand a single drawing in which we can detect the slightest weakness or a moment's hesitancy. Everything bears witness to mastery over the form as well as to his colossal personality. In these sketches genius is the sole dictator."

Brandes singles out Michelangelo's "The Archers," a sketch, "designed with great care, executed with great freedom. . . . Above all it makes the impression of a swarm of forward striving young nude figures in flight, running, springing, soaring. The positions, the flexible, strong backs and legs, the outstretched arms, are expressive of the fact that they are aiming with their bows toward an object that they want

to hit with their arrows, although the bows have been left out. And the target is the Hermes standing far to the right, whose beautifully modelled torso is nude, but before which has been placed an oblong shield toward which the arrows are directed. . . . Michelangelo shows with what delight he has drawn the backs of these sunlit youths which light up like a Greek colonnade."

CHAPTER XI

EARLY HOME LIFE OF BRANDES AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

HAVING come thus far in the consideration of the main works of Georg Brandes, the temptation cannot be resisted to ask, as he did in the case of Nietzsche: What is the value of this man, is he interesting or not? and to this may be added what Brandes also affirms, that in order to get the true measure of any book it is necessary to go straight through any work to the man behind it.

In this casual estimate of the writings of Brandes the reader cannot have failed to have obtained at least an approximate idea as to the characteristics of this Danish critic and litterateur. It is revealed in almost everything that he has written. But setting aside chronological order and turning back to the early youth of Brandes, his "Reminiscences," giving his childhood experiences, furnish a most fascinating picture of the ground-work that proved so rich in

results, and did so much for placing Danish literature conspicuously before the world.

The attachment of Georg Brandes for his mother is a charming chapter in this autobiography of his childhood and youth, which is continued in two subsequent volumes, bringing his account of achievements and aspirations up to the time when he had become master in his particular field of endeavor. Here, also, the Jewish question, as it concerned Georg Brandes, is discussed with utter freedom. On this point he wrote: "Nothing was ever said at home about any religious creed. Neither of my parents was in any way associated with the Jewish religion, and neither of them ever went to the synagogue."

Fundamentally, however, the Brandes home was Jewish, and while disclaiming any denominational connection with the faith, all through his life Georg Brandes has been a champion of Judaism in so far as it meant religious liberty of the individual as against the ignorance and stupidity of those whose bigotry was adamant.

When Brandes visited the United States in 1914, this question of his Jewishness came to the fore on several occasions. In common with other publications, those devoted to Jewish interests spoke in enthusiastic terms about this noted

visitor and "The American Hebrew," while upbraiding Brandes for his supposed lack of attachment to his Jewish ancestry, nevertheless admitted that "whatever he may claim for himself, the world at large credits his talent and genius to the sum total of what Jews here gave to the civilized world. It is as critics that Jews have distinguished themselves in the past. They have been the bearers of civilization, carrying with them from the lands that excluded them the germ of culture with which they had been impregnated. And it is as a critic that Brandes figures in the world's thought.

"He sees through literature," continued "The American Hebrew," "having that keen sense of appreciation, that subtle feeling for values, that wide-sweeping imagination that encompasses everything he reads and at once sees it a part of a tendency, of a current of life. He is a radical wrestling from convention the mask of unreality and giving to thought and picture their natural aspects."

Interviewed by this same publication, Georg Brandes declared that it was preposterous and ridiculous to say that he denied his ancestry. "I have been attacked all my life as a Jew and because I am a Jew, and could not forget nor deny

that I am a Jew, even if I wanted to," he affirmed. "I am just as proud as Spinoza was to belong to the race of Maimonides, and just as indignant as he probably was to be excommunicated by some of them. I have done for my people what I have done for many other oppressed nations. I have done—as a Jew—for the Jews whatever was in my limited power as a writer. Can anybody refuse me the name of Jew because I do not frequent the synagogue? But I do not go to any church; I am not religious."

The late Peter Nansen, than whom no other Scandinavian writer stood closer to the Brandes family, in an intimate sketch of that household has described how the three brothers, Georg, Ernest and Edward, clung to their mother with a devotion that transcended recording. Nansen makes a point of referring to the Jewish atmosphere of the Brandes home despite the fact that religion was tabooed, and, as he tells it, with the mother the central attraction.

"She reigned as a gentle lady of authority," he wrote, "proud of her three talented sons. To all appearance she was entirely unmindful of the many malicious attacks directed against them, but happy that, no matter how they advanced in years, they continued to come to her with all

their sorrows and their joys. In defeat as in victory she remained the same. There was neither arrogance nor the sense of humiliation in her soul. She knew the merits of her sons. Just as little as the most hateful assaults confounded her, so flattery of the most profuse sort failed to affect her."

What a pity, continues Nansen, that the mother did not live to see the real flowering of her sons' talents as the one became a great political leader of his country and the other carried the name of Denmark to the four corners of the earth. "And who really desires to understand Georg Brandes," he concludes, "must, while reading his books, think of a fine little matron with knowing, gentle eyes, sitting in that room busy with knitting or crocheting, attentively following all that was going on around her."

In his charming volume, "Two Visits to Denmark," undertaken in 1872 and 1874, Edmund Gosse furnishes a most entertaining account of his first meeting with Georg Brandes and how this friendship not only became a bridge for the introduction of Danish literature in England, but as throwing new light on the Brandes home circle at that early time.

It was not until thirty-three years following

his Danish visits, in 1911, that Gosse put his impressions into book form. "Exactly how I had become acquainted with Georg Brandes I am no longer able to remember," he wrote, "but between my visit to Denmark in 1872, when I was hardly cognizant of his existence, and my return in 1874, I had received several long letters from him and had ardently replied to them. He had assured me, what indeed I could but easily perceive, that he was the only man in Denmark who represented the spirit of modern Europe in belles-lettres. I had become aware of the extremely critical position which he had created for himself, by his outspoken language in a small society where intellectual ideas were pre-eminently alive, but where orthodoxy, alike in taste, in manners and in creed, was absolutely dominant."

CHAPTER XII

EDMUND GOSSE IN HIS RELATION TO GEORG BRANDES

VERY interesting is Gosse's account of the publishing house of Gyldendal and how he was told by the chief clerk of this famous firm that he should not fail to make the acquaintance of Georg Brandes while in Copenhagen.

"The suggestion about Brandes deeply interested me," writes Gosse. "The writings of the brilliant young Jewish critic had not escaped my reading, but I had not realized the degree to which the successive volumes of that extraordinary work, the 'Main Stream in the Literature of the Nineteenth Century,' were revolutionizing thought and feeling. Of this famous book, which has now penetrated into every language of Europe, and has in its turn become commonplace and classic, the first volume had been issued just after my visit to Denmark in 1872. In 1874 it had reached its third volume, and had achieved a tumultuous reputation."

Gosse next tells how since 1871 Georg Brandes had come to a distinct knowledge of what he wanted in the world of letters, and how by his reiterated statement of that want he had raised a host of enemies.

"In his almost solitary situation," he writes, "defiant of the culture around him, and deeply suspected by it, Brandes supported his courage by association with men who were like-minded in the larger countries of Europe. . . . These companionships were not comprehended or excused in Copenhagen, where, indeed, the passionate admiration of Brandes for Taine, and his eager devotion to Leopardi and to the newly revealed Carducci, were quite unintelligible. Brandes continued, however, to cultivate literary friendships in most of the European countries, and it was only in England that, until our correspondence began in 1873, with the exception of John Stuart Mill, he possessed no acquaintance. He had never found himself at home in the English language or with the English spirit. Much of our intellectual and moral nature had been obscure or repulsive to him; he had felt us to lie outside the circle of European culture."

Georg Brandes' subsequent knowledge of English literature undoubtedly owed very much to

what Gosse conveyed to the eager Dane. The "Main Currents" give ample evidence that few modern writers have entered more whole-heartedly into the soul and substance of English literature. Gosse gives a most interesting account of how he and Brandes discussed the great poets of England. Speaking of the long mornings he spent in the company of Brandes, in the latter's book-crowded rooms in Myntergade, "the world completely shut out, all the jarring elements forgotten, we sat side by side on his broad sofa, with the table drawn up to our elbows and a heap of the poets before us."

And there "we tore the heart out of Shelley and Wordsworth and Swinburne, I reading aloud, Brandes incessantly interrupting to comment, to admire, often startlingly to object and deprecate. He took nothing for granted; the most sacrosanct passages had to appear before his tribunal, nimbus in hand, and plead for that immortality which we all thought they had secured beyond question. His eagerness, his freshness, his new point of view, filled me with instructed delight. I was learning, learning at railroad-rate, by the passion of sympathy. When he found what he liked, his joy was ebullient."

Edmund Gosse's narrative of his Danish ex-

periences in that long ago is replete with interesting description of the customs and manners and general atmosphere of the little country nestling between the North Sea and the Baltic, but from the literary point of view, the outstanding feature must ever remain his acquaintance with Brandes and its effect on the cultural relations between the Danes and the English.

Edmund Gosse found himself in the peculiar situation in Copenhagen that while he was the guest of a high ecclesiastic, Dean Brunn Juul Fog, he spent a large part of his time in the company of that ultra-radical, Georg Brandes, whose literary innovations were driving the orthodox and conservatives to distraction. Not that Dean Fog was a bigot, or entirely unsympathetic with regard to modern thinking. But he belonged to a class that traditionally stood on guard against the unknown, and for this reason accepted things as they were as best suiting conditions all around.

Very illuminating indeed is Gosse's account of what this position of the conservative element meant in its relation to such a one as Georg Brandes. "It was difficult to account for the repulsion and even terror of Georg Brandes

which I heard expressed around me whenever his name came up in general conversation," he tells. "At the present day we have grown so lax and so indulgent to opinions that it is not easy for us to reconstruct, even in imagination, the indignant zealotry of earlier times. That universal suspicion, that scurrilous abuse, of Shelley, which prevailed about 1819, which culminated in the poet's being knocked down by an English bully in the post office of Pisa, and which were reflected in the loathsome insinuations of the 'Quarterly Review'—these are the nearest parallels which I can think of to the way in which Brandes was shunned and maligned in Copenhagen in 1874.

"In England there had been awakened in 1866, and then still existed," Gosse continues, "a certain horror and dread of Swinburne, the ridiculous nature of which was, however, beginning to be apparent even to the Puritans. But the Danish case was different. Brandes had written, at all events, no 'Dolores' and no 'Anactoria'; there was nothing in his essays and reviews which could give even a pretext for this kind of scandal. Indeed, I remember thinking that he was even narrow in some of his judgments. . . .

"But Brandes was a Jew, an illuminated specimen of a race little known at that time in Scandinavia, and much dreaded and suspected. That a scion of this hated people, so long excluded from citizenship, should come forward with a loud message of defiance to the exquisite and effete intellectual civilization of Denmark, this was in itself an outrage. Scandinavians were only just beginning to tolerate the idea of Jews in the community, and here was a wholly impenitent and unchristianized example of the race standing up in the midst of the national idols, and breaking them with his irony and ridicule."

The tone of Copenhagen then was graceful, romantic, orthodox; there was a wide appreciation of literary speculation of a certain kind, kept within the bounds of good taste, reverently attached to the tradition of the elders. This was, too, markedly national. It was part of the political isolation of Denmark, of the pride which her two European wars had fostered and wounded, to be intellectually self-sufficient. It was orthodox to believe that the poetry and philosophy and science of the national writers was all that Danes needed to know of a modern kind.

"Here, then," says Gosse, "was an angry Jew,

with something of the swash-buckler about him, shouting that mental salvation was impossible without a knowledge of 'foreign devils' like Taine and John Stuart Mill and Schopenhauer, of whom dignified and reputable Danes desired to hear only just enough to enable them to lift their hands and shake their heads at the mention of such dreadful names. There was something exasperating, too, in the lofty tone which Brandes adopted. He did not spare the susceptibilities of his fellow-countrymen. However, his revolutionary ideas have, almost without exception, become so acceptable in these thirty-five years as to seem positively tame to-day."

If that was the attitude of the world in 1911, when Edmund Gosse published his "Two Visits to Denmark," how much more should the Brandes ideals be considered most commonplace a decade later when rational thinking has become the possession of the masses everywhere. What a contrast between the year 1874 and 1922 when the occasion of Georg Brandes' eightieth birthday was seized upon by entire Denmark as reflecting honor upon the nation which could claim so noteworthy a son.

CHAPTER XIII

CHAMPIONING OPPRESSED PEOPLES WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

THERE is no doubt whatever that in spite of the professed irreligiosity of Brandes and his non-observance of Jewish regulations from the standpoint of tradition, he has never allowed an opportunity to pass where he could stand spokesman for the people of his race as against bigotry and ignorance. This trait is observable in all his writings. In the "Main Currents of Nineteenth Century Literature" there are innumerable such instances, as where, in the third volume, "The Reaction in France," he points to Mirabeau as championing religious toleration during a debate in the Constituent Assembly.

"In October, 1789," he wrote, "there stood at the bar of the National Assembly a deputation of curiously dressed men with Oriental features. They were Jews from Alsace and Lorraine, who had been deputed by their fellow-believers to appeal for mercy.

" 'Most noble Assembly,' they said, 'we come

in the name of the Eternal, who is the source of all justice and truth, in the name of God, who has given to all men the same rights and the same duties, in the name of humanity, which has been outraged for centuries by the infamous treatment to which the unfortunate descendants of the oldest of nations have been subjected in every country, to beseech you humbly to take our unfortunate fate into consideration. . . . May an improvement in our position, which we have hitherto desired in vain, and which we now tearfully implore, be your work, your benefaction.' "

Brandes, continuing, writes how after a debate there was a general feeling of embarrassment. "Only one member of the Assembly," he says, "a man who as yet had attracted no notice, Maximilien Robespierre, spoke in favor of the motion for granting the Jews equality. He declared their vices to be the consequence of the degraded position in which they had been kept. But he was alone in supporting a measure which, significantly enough, classed Protestants, actors and Jews together. The human rights of the Protestants and the actors were acknowledged, but as Mirabeau recognized the impossibility of passing the clause of the motion which con-

cerned the Jews, he adjourned debate on this clause indefinitely.

"Two years passed. In 1791 the Jews once more appealed. But in what a changed tone! The humble prayer of the slave has become the peremptory demand of the man. . . . Two years spent in the atmosphere of the Revolution had given these pariahs not only self-esteem but pride. This time the measure passed without debate."

With regard to the position of the Jews in France in those early years, Brandes in his monograph on Napoleon Buonoparte makes it a point to show that whether as Consul or Emperor the latter respected the religious customs of this people and in many ways favored them. And in his monumental work on Caesar the Danish scholar with apparent pride tells that not only did the Jews of his time honor the Dictator, but no people within the empire of the Romans were more horrified than they when the great man was so foully murdered.

In his books on Russia and Poland, while ostensibly emphasizing the literary aspects of the countries during the eighties, Brandes also touches the question concerning the Jewish populations. But his attitude with regard to Russia

and Poland became more fully pronounced during the great war when Brandes sternly reprimanded those responsible for the anti-Semitic outbreaks that brought such misery to thousands of Jews in those lands. Writing and speaking on the situation in Poland at the start of the war he gave vent to his utter disappointment that the Poles should be so indifferent to the fates of their fellow-men, just because their beliefs differed.

"It would be most ungrateful for me," he wrote in "The World at War," "now that I am going to speak sharply to the Poles, if I did not acknowledge the exceptional friendship and kindness I have met with in Russian and Austrian Poland. And for this reason I long refrained from making an unkind remark about the country. In 1898, I refused to act as spokesman for the Ruthenians against the Poles, and made bitter enemies of the Ruthenian leaders, who never ceased attacking me, and I was dumb as a wall when Björnstjerne Björnson, shortly before he died, attacked the Poles at the Ruthenians' request.

"Fortunately his attacks were so exaggerated that they could do little harm. Björnson contended that the Poles were akin to the devil him-

self, somewhat as he was conceived in the Middle Ages. I knew more about elections and electoral pressure in Galicia than Björnson, yet I remained silent because I considered it beneath me to attack a people placed in a situation so difficult that it could defend minor injustices as necessary expedients.

"Let it be remembered that the Polish Jews have always shared the sufferings of the Polish Nationalists. In 1794, a corps of Jewish volunteers fought under Kosciusko; their colonel fell in 1809. In 1830, however, a bigoted Polish National Government refused the Jews admission to the army. When the Jews later on dared to ask for the same educational advantages as the rest of the population, Nicholas I punished them by banishing 30,000 families to the steppes of South Russia, where they were made to suffer child conscription. All their boys from the age of six were sent under Cossack guard to be trained as sailors. Most of them died under way.

"Poland's great misery served, for a time, to muzzle the great hatred for the Jews which always slumbers in the masses," Brandes continues. "And Poland's distinguished men tried to prevent it from rising. Poland's greatest poet,

Adam Mickiewicz, in his masterpiece, the national epic of Poland, 'Tan Taadeuz' (1834) made the Jewish innkeeper one of the most sympathetic figures in the poem. He is presented in the fourth song as a musical genius, a master of the national instrument, the cymbal, and the poem culminates when Jankiel plays the Dombrowski march for Dombrowski himself."

In "The World at War" Brandes has much to say about the pogroms, the instigating causes, official indifference to excesses committed against the Jews where these, as frequently was the case, were not directly traceable to the authorities themselves.

"The Russian Poles' anti-Semitic campaign is all the more odious," he declared, "since 40,000 Jewish soldiers, among them many volunteers, served in the Russian army and as the Jews' contributions to the army and the Red Cross were boundless. In larger communities special hospitals for Russian soldiers, without regard to creed, had been founded with Jewish money.

"It will be explained," he adds, "that it is because of my race that I now make this appeal. Personally my descent has influenced me so little that I have been frequently attacked in national Jewish papers and magazines as a renegade of racial ties and faith."

CHAPTER XIV

SPOKESMAN FOR SCANDINAVIA'S NEUTRALITY IN THE WAR

WHILE the world-war automatically kept Georg Brandes at home and allowed him to complete some of his most important literary works, Denmark's neutral position and the little understood reason why Scandinavia had to stand apart from the conflict required spokesmen of international renown to plead her case abroad. The fact that the Schleswig question came up for consideration during the great struggle made it essential that every loyal Dane should come forward in order to strengthen the national position.

Georg Brandes as publicist, as ardent champion of Danish neutrality and especially as defender of Denmark's right to have returned to her the Schleswig province, torn from the mother country in the war with Germany in the sixties, proved him equal to the great task he had set himself with regard to answering the reproofs hurled at the Danes because they could not see their way to fly in the face of the German ag-

gressor. Of course, to-day it is well understood that Denmark had no other way open than maintain strict neutrality. But while national tempers were at fever heat, reason did not always prevail as against what each country considered its indefeasible right.

In "The World at War," Georg Brandes speaks his mind freely on the questions of that day. No one can accuse him of partiality toward Germany. As a matter of fact, his attitude turned many of his former German friends against him. Introductory to the book, as it were, there is incorporated in the volume something that Brandes wrote as early as 1881, which is almost prophetic. Speaking about the political outlook he said: "The love of liberty, in the English sense, is to be found in Germany only among men of the generation which, within ten years, will have disappeared. And when that time comes, Germany will lie alone, isolated, hated by the neighboring countries: a stronghold of conservatism in the centre of Europe. Around it, in Italy, in France, in Russia, in the North, there will rise a generation imbued with international ideas and eager to carry them out in life. But Germany will lie there, old and half stifled in her coat of mail, armed to the teeth,

and protected by all the weapons of murder and defense which science can invent.

"And there will come great struggles and greater wars. If Germany wins, Europe in comparison with America, will politically be as Asia in comparison to Europe. But if Germany loses, then . . . But it is not seemly to play the prophet."

What makes "The World at War" particularly interesting is the fact that it has that journalistic touch which, combined with literary treatment, proves the author as much at home in current affairs as when closeted in his study with belles lettres as his goal. The newspaper contributions of Georg Brandes, in fact, constitute an activity in itself.

The long established friendship between Brandes and Georges Clemenceau, which foundered on the rock of neutrality that the Danish writer looked upon as immovable for the protection of the Scandinavian nations, has not as yet been renewed. The controversial positions of the two eminent men for a time occupied the press of all countries. Bitter as was Clemenceau in his attack, Brandes always replied with due regard for the period before the war when their relationship was of the most intimate kind.

It is characteristic of Brandes' entire attitude when he said in one of his answers to Clemenceau that "no Dane who lived through 1864 could ever forget that Denmark lost two-fifths of its territory; nor that Prussia and Austria stripped us not only of the territory which, from a national if not from a political point of view, they may have had some right to, but in North Schleswig annexed territory absolutely Danish in language, character, culture, and feeling.

"We have not forgotten, either," Brandes continued, "that the promise of 1866, by which the Danes of North Schleswig were to be given the opportunity of becoming Danish again, was never kept. And we have—with deeper interest and a more quickened feeling than the French—witnessed the German regime's increasing and incessant persecution of Danish language and spirit in North Schleswig.

"Nevertheless, some of us still retain a fragment of political insight, and we would regard a Danish declaration of war on Germany as sheer madness. The war of 1864 was not declared by Denmark; it was accepted because Denmark's naive and misplaced confidence in an English promise to the effect that in case of war Denmark would not stand alone. If proof

of modern statesmen's political negligence and lack of foresight is desired, the attitude of France and England during the war of 1864 is a fertile study. France, then dominated by Napoleon III, believed she was pursuing a wise policy in supporting Prussia, hoping naively that Bismarck might some time do her a good turn therefor; and England, without the slightest protest, allowed Prussia to acquire the port of Kiel. If to-day Denmark has neither a fleet capable of offensive action, nor a boundary which can be defended, this is due to England's and France's attitude in 1864."

The fact that Danish neutrality did not prevent the Allies from demanding that Germany return to Denmark part of North Schleswig is conclusive proof that the Danish position must have been recognized as satisfactory. On the other hand, Brandes, while striving with might and main to uphold the Danish spirit in the territory conquered by Germany in 1864, clung to his opinion that it would be detrimental to Denmark's best interests to have the German-colonized southern part of Schleswig join Denmark when the plebiscite pointed the other way.

In what he terms "The Second Part of the Tragedy," a continuation of "The World at

War," Georg Brandes deals with the first year of peace following the armistice. He presents to view many diverse characters, and some of his findings, as set forth between October 22, 1918, and September 15, 1919, turned out only too true as the international chaos continued. He proceeds relentlessly against the peace terms of Versailles, but at the same time he handles Lenin and the Bolshevik regime without mercy. What he here writes about Russia is an illuminating chapter in the history of the great war and after.

With regard to Brandes' relations with William Archer, who, like Clemenceau, claimed many years' acquaintance with the Danish critic and who also felt aggrieved because of Denmark's neutrality and Brandes' defense of the same, there likewise sprang up a newspaper controversy which, happily, ended in the renewal of the friendship between them. As he knows the English, Brandes says, there is too much common sense in them to allow them to go to the same lengths as other nations with respect to keeping up hatreds. In an interview with a representative of the "New York Times" at the beginning of the year he declared that the world of to-day is being destroyed by the animosities that war has nourished.

In support of his contention, Brandes spoke first of all of France. It is full, he said, of chauvinism. Never had he known the French to be so chauvinistic as now, and when a small group of Frenchmen, headed by Henri Barbusse, do what they can against this attitude, they are isolated and powerless to make themselves felt. Brandes reinforced the point by referring to his controversy with Clemenceau. For ten years they practically lived together. As the Danish critic told the story:

"During the war, when some of the Danes were getting rich out of profiteering, Clemenceau wrote in his paper: 'The Danes are a nation without pride.' I immediately protested. Why should all the Danes be branded a nation without pride because there were some profiteers among us? Are there not profiteers everywhere—in America, for instance?

"But my protest infuriated Clemenceau. Ever since he has been in a fury against me. 'I knew Brandes for ten years,' he wrote, 'yet never did I know what kind of a man he really was until now!' How can that be true? How can a man have two meals a day with another for ten years and not know what kind of man the other is until something that happens at the end of those

ten years accidentally lets him know? Why, that is absurd! Yes, Clemenceau hates me now. Everywhere there is hate."

No European writer is more frequently sought than Georg Brandes for the purpose of learning his opinion about the great events that make history. America has also learned that, small as is Denmark, it possesses in him a man with clear vision whose judgment may not suit every taste but whose predictions in matters of international importance have seldom failed to occur as outlined. And it is because he combines the scholar with the publicist, and keeps abreast of the affairs of the moment, that Brandes has been able to present such magnificent pictures of the great personalities of the past and makes them live again.

CHAPTER XV

GEORG BRANDES AS IMPROMPTU SPEAKER AND PUBLICIST

IT is not always the case that a noted writer is also conspicuous in affairs of great public interest, or as a speaker who can hold his audience by sheer force of personality, as well as through the abounding knowledge of which he may be the fortunate possessor.

Georg Brandes' impromptu speeches, the numerous addresses delivered by him on stated occasions, and the frequency with which he is called upon whenever some striking event necessitates the presence of some individual truly representative of the world of literature, are the best commentaries as to what he stands for at this day. The sum and substance of his speeches, covering over half a century, Brandes incorporated in a volume that makes as fascinating reading as any novel. Here we are brought face to face with the real Georg Brandes; the satirist, the sympathetic adviser of the student just out of college; the arraigner of stupidity

"that lords it in high places"; the man who has run the gamut from being looked upon askance as a destroyer of civilization as it exists, until the world to-day acclaims him the equal of the foremost personalities of his generation, in respect to critical acumen and literary observation.

This book, "Speeches," as Brandes tells in the introduction, is the collected expressions of an individual who has traveled much and seen much. It ranges from characterization of cities and individuals to the relation of personal experiences in the life of Brandes himself. In all there are some seventy-odd speeches, chosen from among a far greater number delivered by him during his long and busy career. The great merit of the work, as read after one gains an acquaintance with his other writings, is that in many instances it visualizes the Brandes process and sheds new light on his achievements. Its autobiographical tenor is what makes it the best kind of self-revelation.

In December, 1876, Brandes spoke before the Students' Association of the Christiania University under circumstances that would have discouraged one less sure of himself than this lance-breaker of the eighties. He had been denied the privilege of speaking in any of the halls directly

within the jurisdiction of the university authorities. But the Norwegian student youth were already then familiar with his battles at home and anxious to hear what he had to tell them about the progressive movement that he was almost alone in championing in Scandinavia.

It was a speech that has never been forgotten in Christiania. As Brandes records it, the main reason why the university authorities had refused him house-room was because he should at one time have said that the offering of Isaac was a legend. He also expressed his surprise that a country which ranked first in Scandinavia with respect to literature, whose artists and scientists had distinguished themselves in many directions, should feel a need for hearing from one who, like himself, had been termed an "agitator."

"When I ask what use you have for an agitator," Brandes said in addressing the students, "I always get the same answer: 'We are intellectually suffocated. We possess not even the least religious liberty in this so-called land of freedom. As a matter of fact, a liberal movement inaugurated by a Norwegian would do more harm than good. The time is not yet. We feel as if the pressure is not to be shaken off.'

"But is that not an illusion? A friend of mine,

the young art-historian, Julius Lange, when a little boy, was put in a school in Copenhagen which was conducted by a couple of old maids who very carefully made notes of the child's merits and shortcomings, especially the latter. But already the first week this was found: 'The little Julius does not know his figures,' and for some time after it was still: 'The little Julius does not yet know his figures.'

"The boy's father, the old and highly respected pedagogue, author of 'School and Life,' to the great consternation of the old ladies then wrote on the report-card: 'Will you then not have the goodness to teach the little Julius his figures?'

"Permit me to apply these words to those in this audience who complain of this pressure: Why don't you shake it off?"

Since that memorable first appearance in Christiania, Georg Brandes has been a frequent and a highly honored guest in that city, and none have been more anxious to pay him tribute than the very university authorities that feared his "agitation" in the year 1876. That it was due to him in large measure that Henrik Ibsen spread the fame of Norway broadcast is not the least debt that Norwegians owe the Danish critic.

"Speeches" takes the reader to Paris, Rome,

Berlin, London and other great world centres where Brandes' versatility as orator found full opportunity to display itself. On June 15, 1906, the society, "Les Lettres" of France gave a dinner in honor of Anatole France and Brandes, in the Bois de Boulogne. On this occasion the literary and social world of Paris had gathered in force, since two such intellectual giants were the centre of attraction. Replying to a toast, Brandes expressed his gratification in being honored along with so great a man as France, "one whose intellectual fineness and artistry prohibits that my name should be mentioned in unison with his."

"Nevertheless," Brandes continued, "in one direction I dare say I approach close to him: in my love of liberty and justice. Just as the oppressed people of Europe and Asia know how to treasure his name, his enthusiasm for the independence of nations, so my name may not be entirely unknown in that respect. We have, if not side by side, so, at least, with common purpose, fought the good fight for the people who suffer from the coercive regime of the conqueror and the autocrat, and also for the poor and weak who groan beneath the tyranny of

class. Men who think and speak are their natural defenders.

"The Armenians had asked me to come to Berlin to champion their cause before the German public and attack the Turkish policy of the Kaiser. The task was no easy one. That was a time when I should have liked to have had Anatole France at my side. He understands both how to attack and to please. I knew only how to attack.

"Anatole France is highly placed in the world. His voice carries far and wide. My position is less happy, since I belong to a people whose language is unknown to the rest of Europe. Anatole France is read in the original; all know and admire his exquisite style. I am only known through translations; sometimes translations after translations, and I consider it almost lucky for me that French is about the only leading language of Europe into which very little of mine has been rendered. That makes it possible for me to make you believe that my books would read very beautifully in French.

"But, no! It is impossible to produce anything artistic except in one's own language. When you take away his own tongue, you strip the writer of his skin, as with Marsya of old."

It is to be taken for granted that when addressing a French audience, Georg Brandes employs the French language. And in England, it is English that is his instrument of appeal. In the Authors' Club of London, before the Royal Society of Literature, the Shakespeare Reading Society, the Playgoers' Club of Manchester, or in Edinburgh, wherever Brandes has spoken, his remarkable grasp of the English language carried surprise.

In a speech that he delivered in the Polyglot Club of London, November 29, 1913, he referred to the fact that years before this club had invited him to become its president. Probably at that time he had no more idea than most people that a great world-war impended, but what he had to say about national hatreds and misunderstandings was amply demonstrated as a fact when, less than a year later, Europe burst into flame.

"But in the Polyglot Club national enmities have no existence," declared Brandes. "There is no persecution of languages, classes do not fight each other for supremacy. Here reigns humanity, the humanity that the conquering nationism of to-day considers a childish dream from the eighteenth century. Within these walls hu-

manity is a living reality, such as the future will find it to be—the great power. It is a unique thing, it is grand and beautiful, this to be without national prejudices in a century like ours.

"You have founded a little university within a club, a world in a nutshell. But he who says university, says universum. Newton, Voltaire, Goethe smile down on you from their celestial abode."

When the tercentenary of Shakespeare was being celebrated throughout the world, Denmark's unique contribution was a performance of Hamlet at the Kronborg Castle, Elsinore, where the Melancholy Dane was supposed to have trod on life's stage in all that solitary grandeur that made the character immortal. While this outdoor performance proved an event in European theatrical circles, it fell to Georg Brandes to do the introductory honors on that occasion. He spoke of Hamlet's fame and how through him Denmark had won renown. He showed how the influence of Shakespeare on the intellectual life of the Danes had been exceedingly great. Brandes never appeared to greater advantage before a Danish audience than in that hour when the ramparts of Elsinore Castle re-

sounded to his impassioned speech in memory of the Bard of Avon.

With regard to the many speeches delivered by Brandes when in America in 1914, it is enough to say that they occupy a chapter in the life-history of the man. In New York, Chicago, Minneapolis and other places, wherever he went he not only lectured before enthusiastic audiences, but was lionized at banquets and other entertainments and was called upon to speak. Everywhere he was made the subject of ovations; throughout, Brandes proved himself the versatile orator and extemporaneous speaker.

The final speech included in the volume in question is dated July 2, 1919, and was in honor of the celebrated Swedish writer, Hjalmar Soederberg. Since then, however, Brandes has delivered some of his most important addresses which, it is to be assumed, some day will constitute a second volume of his "Speeches." It is very certain that when Scandinavia, in common with the rest of Europe, paid tribute to Molière on the three hundredth anniversary of his birth, the address by Brandes in the Dagmar Theatre of Copenhagen proved him as great a master of speech as ever and brought the distinguished audience in complete rapport with the French

dramatist whom the Danish scene owed so much. Had there been no Molière it is quite certain that Ludwig Holberg, the "Danish Molière," would never have achieved what he did.

It was the task of Brandes to speak on Jean Baptiste Poquelin, otherwise Molière, before the performance of "Tartuffe" at the Dagmar Theatre. And with what keen perception, with what surety and mastery of facts accumulated during a lifetime he limned that remarkable career. In ten years Molière wrote thirty plays, of which at least ten are masterpieces. He is actor, theatrical director, instructor, playwright —in every direction his genius strikes fire. Brandes enters into the personality of the great Frenchman, his daily life and struggles. One seems to hear in that oration an echo of what the Danish scholar himself had to contend with until the world recognized his worth. If the "Voltaire" of Brandes constitutes one of his chief achievements, most certainly, had he written a companion-piece about Molière it could not have been other than a similarly excellent work. As it is, we shall probably have to be satisfied with the anniversary address and detached sketches of the French dramatist written by Brandes in years gone by.

CHAPTER XVI

UNIQUE INTERPRETATION OF GODS AND HEROES IN HOMER

A LECTURE that could fittingly be included in such a second volume as is suggested is the one on Homer which Brandes delivered on the fiftieth anniversary of his first appearance on the platform of the University of Copenhagen. It has frequently been remarked that Brandes' entire nature is Greek. However this may be, his address on Greek civilization in the time of Homer, on Greek heroes and Greek worship, proclaimed the Danish scholar as sympathetic to a degree. And if his mind is of Greek mold, a study of his features brings home how his long acquaintance with the histories and life-works of the men of ancient Greece seem reflected in that facial contour which is a very playground for his emotions. Athens has stamped on his features its cultural past and philosophic tendencies, blending amiability and aloofness; characteristics of the great thinker and the great poet.

It is quite possible that when Georg Brandes

appeared before that distinguished audience gathered in the University of Copenhagen, the reason why he chose Homer and ancient Greece for his subject may have been that he then contemplated the visit that he subsequently paid the land of the Hellenes. At any rate, it is worth noting that when Brandes arrived in Athens he was received with every honor due a famous man. The Greek Government placed a handsome villa at the disposal of the great critic, with the request that he make his stay a lengthy one. The University of Athens conferred on him the highest distinction within the gift of those authorities.

There is, then, a direct connection between anything that Brandes had to say about Greek antiquity and his most recent visit to the land of Homer. For which reason Homeric Greece, as depicted in the anniversary address, takes on an added importance when Brandes declared that "he who has seen modern Greece may understand the nature of ancient Hellas."

For, Brandes emphasized, with particular reference to the gods and heroes of Homeric Greece, "Hellenic greatness springs from the harmonious interplay of the various human faculties; it is a thing of the inner man. Allness to the

Greek is cosmos, order, beauty. Even his religion is a beautiful ceremony, for religion to him is not the fear of a god who commands and prohibits. It finds expression instead in the festive procession, the song, the dance.

"Although the Greeks before Homer were acquainted with mysticism," Georg Brandes declared, "there was little of this feeling when the poems appeared. Back of the Homeric gods lies Fate, corresponding in its relentless fixity to what we mean by the inexorableness of death or the unvarying character of natural law. What the Greek chiefly prizes is common sense, limitation, harmony. His world is not infinite; but it is a harmonious whole.

"A time arrives when the vague deific personalities outlined by the Greek imagination stand back to make room for a new figure, the hero. And the development of this new personality forms a decisive chapter in the history of the Greek mind. In the Greek hero man realizes his own strength and power, and arises as a free being. At first, it is true, the hero represents no qualities save bodily strength. He is both cruel and uncouth. But gradually he becomes more and more humane, and increasing tasks bring into play all human qualities. Each little

district in Greece has its local heroes who are held in fond memory and worshiped as superior to those of the neighboring places. The hero is a demi-god and a citizen at the same time.

"We see these heroes vying with one another to secure distinction: Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus, Aias, Diomedes. Each has his honored day.

"The first striking event in the intellectual history of Hellas is the emergence of the hero. The next is the hero's absorption of the gods, his taking possession of them. The excavations of the last fifty years at Hissarlik, Mucenae and Cyprus have made us acquainted with the prehistoric deities who antedate historic Greece and yet are intimately linked with it. When in the Iliad the swift-flowing river Xanthus grows angry with Achilles for having choked its current with the bodies of the slain, and when, exposed to the fire of the Hephaestus it cries to Hera for aid, then we begin to have the genuine personification.

"A northern race, a people born under a clouded sky and accustomed to look upon nature as accursed and mankind as tainted with original sin, a people consequently sighing after deliverance, can have no conception of the heartfelt

enthusiasm with which the Athenians of antiquity intoned the hymn in praise of Pallas Athene. To them she was pure reason, wisdom, wit—all that we term genius. She was more. She was the city's providential protectress, forever youthful, healthy, strong. Yet she was at the same time human—witness her predilection for Achilles and her pact with him against Hector."

Excerpts like these from an address sparkling throughout as delivered in the Danish language, of which Brandes is past master, in their translated form give but a faint idea of the Homeric picture presented on that memorable November evening of 1921, in the hall of the Copenhagen University. And yet, to describe Georg Brandes' activity even casually it is essential that at least this slight reference be made to his love for Greece and all that Greek antiquity has meant to the forming of a character whose youthful enthusiasm, as he entered his eighty-first year, was not the least remarkable thing about this Scandinavian interpreter of culture throughout the ages.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SCIENTIFIC INTERNATIONALISM OF GEORG BRANDES

IT is a good while since Georg Brandes felt inclined to accept personally the many honors bestowed on him because of his position in the literary world. The eightieth anniversary of his birth found him far from the shores of Denmark. As a matter of fact, he left for the south of Europe in order to escape the festivities planned for the occasion. Ten years before, when he attained three-score and ten, Danish intellectual circles managed to keep him home on the day of celebration. Then, as this year, in many other parts of the world tributes were paid him as the outstanding figure in the domain of criticism.

In the United States, New York and Minneapolis were the main centres paying him honors on February 4th last. In the metropolis, the American Scandinavian Foundation arranged a dinner at the Hotel Plaza, which was attended by many leading men and women.

Among the outstanding addresses were those of Professor Robert Herndon Fife, of Columbia University, and of Professor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, of the Boston Union College. Professor Dana, who is a grandson of the famous American poet, had met Brandes in France just ten years before. Professor Fife's address was along the lines of the introduction to the present book.

"The circumstances of our meeting were such as to impress his internationalism upon my mind from the start," said Professor Dana. "It was a spot itself peculiarly appropriate to the great internationalist, a club of curious international nature called the 'Autour du Monde,' situated outside Paris, with beautiful gardens along the river. Even the gardens in this international club were of an international character, one garden being English, one Italian, one Japanese, and so on. I remember, as we showed Brandes about from garden to garden, making in this way a tour of the world, he would make brilliant observations on the different national characteristics apropos of the different settings of the various gardens.

"Then again, this international club had a sort of international library filled with books of

different literatures. And I remember Brandes clearly going about from shelf to shelf, snatching now at a book in one language and now at one in another, opening them eagerly and quoting some striking phrase from them. Then overhearing someone condemning some contemporary radical thinker he would throw himself into the discussion, hotly defending the heterodox point of view, whatever it may have been, emphasizing his point by gesticulating with a paper-cutter that he snatched from the table, the hair bristling on his head and his speech bristling with epigrams.

"There were guests of various nationalities at this international club, and to them all Brandes spoke in their own language, showing an appalling familiarity with the language and the literature of each guest. I remember, for example, his quoting to me lines written by my own grandfather which had been quite forgotten by me, if I ever knew them.

"At that time," Professor Dana continued, "I happened to be acting as Lecteur d'Anglais at the Sorbonne, and I took the liberty of asking Brandes to come and speak before the club we had of French students who were studying English. He chose as his subject, 'The Great Men,'

and we had notices posted, reading 'Georg Brandes: The Great Man,' so that some thought his talk was to be autobiographical, that he was himself to be the hero of his lecture. The posters, at any rate, drew an enormous crowd, and when the evening came and I was escorting Brandes to the hall, we found the corridors outside so packed that for a moment 'the great man himself' was shut out from his own lecture. In momentary vexation, Brandes would lean up against the wall and seize his head with both hands, half humorously. When finally we had cleared a way for him to the platform, his lecture proved to be a bold challenge to popular democracy by showing how the welfare of the human race as a whole depended on its great men and on recognizing their greatness.

"Brandes' own greatness lies in his recognition of the greatness of great men, no matter what their race or creed. The history of his long life has been the gradual spreading of his sympathies until he has become the critic of the widest international range in the world. In this almost unusual breadth of culture, he has come to treat the whole world as one. From the first he sought unity and hated all divisions, and characteristically his earliest book was an attack

on dualism in life's philosophy. Brandes came to study one by one all the main currents of nineteenth century literature and in him all these main currents seem to be united as in an ocean. At first it was Hegel that he read, he says, 'with a veritable intoxication of comprehension and delight.' Then, as an antidote to German abstraction, he came under the influence of the Frenchman, Taine, whom he met in Paris and whose scientific method revealed to him the determining influences of 'race' and 'milieu' and 'moment,' so that from now on Brandes sought to show the different national characteristics of the different countries he studied.

"Denmark is marvellously situated for just such an international point of view. The peninsula of Jutland, jutting out from the very heart of Europe, offered a detached centre from which to study the civilization of the different nations. Like a modern Viking of the spirit, Brandes made adventurous voyages into the realm of gold which are the various national literatures. From the North and the East and the South and the West he returned to Denmark with the riches he had gathered. He interpreted to his countrymen the culture of the rest of Europe.

"But in interpreting these European civilizations to Denmark, Brandes has interpreted them to themselves. It was Brandes who first revealed that great Norwegian 'master-builder,' Ibsen. It was he who first revealed the German superman, Nietzsche. Nietzsche has said that the most brilliant characterization made of him was made by Brandes when he described him as an 'aristocratic radical,' showing that the distinction between democrat and aristocrat is not always the same as between radical and conservative."

Professor Dana next dwelt on Brandes' productivity, how no critic has written lives of so many supermen of so many nations: Shakespeare, Goethe, Holberg, Voltaire, Julius Caesar, Michelangelo. He told of Brandes' love of liberty. He had the honor during the war of being the best hated man in Europe. With the coming of war, "Brandes kept his international point of view unshaken. He denounced the treaty of peace with the same vehemence he had denounced the declaration of war. The same internationalism that he had revealed to me among the gardens and the guests of that 'Cercle Autour du Monde,' the internationalism with which he had steered his courses amidst all the main currents of nineteenth century European literature, the interna-

tionalism which he had maintained in the midst of all the cross-currents of the great war, he still kept in the midst of the great conflicting influences of the modern world."

All his life Georg Brandes has shown the need of appreciating other civilizations, even those of our enemies, was the conclusion of Professor Dana's significant address on the day that the Danish critic turned octogenarian. What he feels about Europe is likely to continue to be true until at length the great men of the nations of the earth achieve the spirit of internationalism, the scientific internationalism of Brandes himself.

Besides the addresses of Professors Fife and Dana, the Hotel Plaza celebration in honor of Brandes' birthday was made conspicuous by the introductory remarks of Dr. Henry Goddard Leach, whose long association with the American Scandinavian Foundation, first as secretary, and editor of the "Review," and later as acting in an advisory capacity, fitted him eminently for the task of speaking on the influence of Georg Brandes on world-literature. The audience, composed largely of men and women prominent in literary and artistic circles, listened to a graphic account of the main factors that had gone to the making of Brandes' fame throughout the world.

CHAPTER XVIII

BRANDES AS SEEN BY COLLEAGUES AND CONTEMPORARIES

THE late James Huneker, who bore a certain intellectual resemblance to Georg Brandes, and between whom and the Danish critic there had sprung up a friendship that lasted until the former's death, on Brandes' visit to the United States had the opportunity to personally study the man to whom he had dedicated his "Egoists." Very shortly before his death, Huneker wrote in the "New York Times":

"When I saw Dr. Georg Brandes at the Hotel Astor a few months before the war I told him he resembled the bust made of him by Klinger. It was the first time I had talked to the celebrated Danish author. Then past seventy, as active as a young man, I could see no reason why he shouldn't live to be a centenarian. An active brain is lodged in his nimble body. I made up my mind to ask him no questions about America.

"The affections of Brandes have always been bestowed upon the literatures of England and

France. Maurice Biegeon has said that Brandes did for the nineteenth century what Sainte-Beuve did for the seventeenth in his 'History of Port Royal.' He will remain the arch type of cosmopolitan critics for future generations. A humanist, the mind of Brandes is steel-colored. Ductile, when white-hot, it flows like lava from a volcano in eruption; but always it is steel, whether liquified or rigid. Preeminently it is the fighting mind. He objects to being described as 'brilliant.' The model of Brandes as portrait painter of ideas and individuals is Velasquez, because Velasquez is not brilliant, but true.

"Yet he is brilliant and lucid, and steel-like, whether writing of Shakespeare or Lassalle. An ardent upholder of Taine and the psychology of race, he contends that in the individual, not in the people, lies the only hope for progress. He is altogether for the psychology of the individual. Like Carlyle, he has the cult of the great man. The fundamental question is: Can the well-being of the race, which is the end of all effort, be attained without great men? 'I say no, and again, no!' he cries. He is a firm believer that every tub should stand on its own bottom."

Richard Le Gallienne's appreciation of Georg Brandes is no less heartfelt than Huneker's.

Nearly two decades ago he expressed himself as follows: "In Georg Brandes we see criticism fulfilling its highest and broadest functions. To speak of him as a critic in the customary limited sense in which the word is applied to reviewers of books or connoisseurs of the arts in general would be misleading; as misleading as to speak of Georg Meredith as a novelist, meaning thereby a purveyor of frivolous entertainment for the sentimental.

"The great critic is the interpreter of life as expressed through the medium of the arts. As literature is the artistic medium employing as its material the most vital and various of human interests, it follows that a really great literary critic has the world for his province, and in proportion as his interpretation of literature is fundamental and catholic, he becomes an original creative exponent of human life.

"In other words," declares Le Gallienne, "your great literary critic is a philosopher who makes use of literature to interpret human nature and human history. Such a critic, at all events, is Dr. Brandes. His real business is with humanity. Many students are merely students of aesthetics. They approach the arts from the pleasure point of view, analyzing the kind of

pleasure they give, and determining their purely aesthetic—or, as we loosely say, 'artistic,' value. This is necessarily a part of any critic's business, but Georg Brandes is primarily a philosopher and historian and only secondarily the professor of aesthetics."

There is a good deal of truth in what Richard Le Gallienne says with regard to the qualities that mark Georg Brandes as an outstanding figure among the world's leading intellectuals. We have already seen how, according to Prof. Fife's introductory remarks, Brandes himself considers the term 'philosopher' too all-embracing for him and how 'critic,' in his estimation, does not go far enough. As a matter of fact, aesthetics lie very close to the heart of the Danish scholar and it ought not be forgotten that his early aspirations went in the direction of securing that chair in the University of Copenhagen. That his remarkable reasoning powers are in line with philosophical requirements there is no doubt. Brandes thinks deeply on the great questions that concern mankind. But the abstract, after all, is not his proper sphere. Pragmatic to a degree, there is something of William James in his makeup, albeit he falls short in approaching the James theory because of his outspoken policy of want-

ing to make the theoretical absolutely practical.

Perhaps no Danish scholar has stood closer to Georg Brandes during the past sixty years than Professor Harald Höffding, who occupies the chair of philosophy at the University of Copenhagen. Professor Höffding is almost of the identical age as Brandes. No man should be better able to judge of his fellow-countryman than he. What he has recently had to say on the subject carries weight.

Professor Höffding, writing on the occasion of Brandes' eightieth birthday, after paying tribute to the latter's masterly skill in analyzing the characters of the great men of the past, told of the sensation created in Denmark when Brandes first returned from abroad and startled the conservative element with new ideas that were nothing less than revolutionary. "The picture of the outside world that he presented led into new and unexplored regions," says Professor Höffding. "He instilled a desire for independent thinking. He touched on many problems, sometimes playfully and simply; again in a spirit of indignation and defiance of the conventions. He not only stirred up the purely literary circles, but in the domain of religion he

caused an upheaval that was nothing less than cyclonic."

Professor Höffding emphasized that Georg Brandes is possessed of a most extraordinary ability to both create enthusiasm and antagonism. His attacks against the hypocritical and the false at times would overlap so that the genuine in religious feeling would suffer from his sallies. In the eyes of many he was looked upon as only desirous of breaking down established usages.

"However," continues Professor Höffding, "the young people came flocking to the standard of Georg Brandes. He is the one who, more than any other here in Denmark, succeeded in creating an enthusiastic following. That later a number left his ranks was due to the fact that the mental nourishment that he had provided was no longer of a kind to satisfy them. But the main reason why opposition against him has been diminishing is not so much because the irreligious ideas that he advanced have been accepted as correct, but rather because the majority of people are beginning to realize that problems of this nature are not to be solved by either hiding or crushing them, but must be placed in the broad daylight so that each one may reach a solution through individual experience."

Professor Höffding expresses the opinion that Brandes' strength lies in his aesthetic viewpoint, and that at the same time this is also the weakness in his intellectual armor. When he analyzes, criticises, judges, always it is beauty that is his measuring stick. To him anything that is beautiful must also be good. In spite of his matchless versatility, he suffers from a certain intellectual stigmatism which very often leads him to the wrong perspective.

"But after all," concludes Professor Höffding, "we as a nation are indebted to him for innumerable things. His love for Denmark and for the Danish language transcends mere words. The beauty, freshness, depth, that pervade his description of literary history these many years ago I have never forgotten. The young doctor of 1871 is now an old man, but the fire of his youth has never been extinguished. He remains in possession of all that genius which was his marked characteristic in that long ago."

Professor Otto Jespersen, conceded to be the greatest living authority on the English language, and at the time of Brandes' golden jubilee Rector at the University of Copenhagen, in addressing Brandes on that occasion spoke feelingly of what the university owed the distinguished critic.

"What a change in sentiment!" declared Professor Jespersen, "between the public's opinion at this day and fifty years ago when Georg Brandes struck consternation in the ranks of traditional conservatism. I am proud that it has fallen to me to bid him welcome in the year of my rectorship. Brandes has always fought with open vizier, for what he considered right and just. He has never permitted his sword to rust."

CHAPTER XIX

THE LITERARY WORKSHOP OF A GREAT EUROPEAN CRITIC

THE literary workshop of a noted writer always holds out a certain amount of fascination, and in the case of Georg Brandes this is especially true, since he so seldom takes the public into his confidence with regard to methods peculiar to himself. However, now and then there have been exceptions when he has revealed himself in working harness. A case in point may be cited when some time ago Anders Kirkeby, a well-known Danish journalist, wrote an interview which was published in "Politiken," of Copenhagen.

"Politiken" ever since its establishment has been the one Danish newspaper in which Brandes' essays and sketches have appeared exclusively. Henrik Cavling, its editor, is one of the ablest European journalists of to-day. Describing his interview with Brandes, Mr. Kirkeby wrote: "I found Brandes sitting in the study of his apartment on the Strand Boulevard, be-

tween rows of bookcases reaching from floor to ceiling. The wall space did not seem to allow room for a single picture. Only in the bay window one discovers a few plaster casts of Florentine medallions.

"As is his custom, Brandes entrenched himself behind his writing table, where notepaper, newspapers, letters and books appear to be in an interminable flux between a broken inkstand, a tray with penholders and a bottle of mineral water. Dangerously near the edge of the further corner of the table stands a tall vase containing deep-red roses. On other tables, under the tables, on chairs, in the corners of the room, on the window sill, everywhere stacks of books, heaps of letters. A pear-shaped electric bulb hanging from the ceiling furnishes the light, while a green shade protects against the glare.

"And this is all!" exclaims Mr. Kirkeby. "In this environment, in this workshop where for fifty years the strongest intellectual weapons of liberty and enlightenment have been forged, between that broken inkstand and the vase with its red roses we have been compelled to look for Denmark's mental focus during half a century."

What, then, has been the real influence of Brandes on Danish literature, the quality by

which the future is likely to pass judgment on his achievements? It is a question to which an answer is not easy. First of all, it is an undeniable fact that through him Danish intellectual circles of the eighties were stirred to their foundation; that he created a following of no mean importance. It is true, as Professor Höffding has remarked that there came a time when some of those who formerly classed themselves his disciples struck out along paths that went into opposite directions to what Brandes claimed to be the right road. At the same time, whether they admit it or not, the seed sown by him found lodgment almost everywhere.

In a very interesting work, "Denmark and the Danes," of which William J. Harvey and Christian Reppien are the joint authors, the chapter on modern literature appears so pertinent to the present consideration of Georg Brandes that it is worth quoting from.

"A study of the most distinctive Danish literature of the nineteenth century," we read, "reveals a gradual progression from an ideal romanticism to a strong and forceful realism. . . . During the war of 1848-1850, nationalism, patriotism, liberalism, introduced a new note into Danish literature. Then followed the re-

action consequent upon the failure of the war of 1864. There ensued a decade of stagnation; a fresh impetus was required. Denmark waited for the new pen which was to usher her literature upon its latest phase.

"The man who more than all others created this new era was Georg Brandes. He was the great literary engineer. He dug the big canals through which the literary streams of other countries flowed over Denmark. He irrigated his own country with the mighty Nile waters of France and Germany, Italy and England. He was intensely realistic, a powerful and cultured opponent of 'rose-pink' idealism both in literature and art. His first lectures aroused a storm of opposition, followed by embittered warfare of words, declaimed and written. Yet he won disciples—Holger Drachmann, Schandorph, and others. The quarrel between the old and the new school was waged in verse and prose. . . .

"The writings of Brandes are often said to be anti-national and anti-religious. Rather are they cosmopolitan and agnostic. He is a Dane, though he has lived as much in Berlin and Paris as in Copenhagen. It is possible that the movement of which he was the forerunner and founder has been carried much further than he himself

desired, for in later years he has not commended all the exaggerations or the literary excesses of his followers.

"Worthiest perhaps of all the disciples of the new school was Holger Drachmann (1846-1908), a lyricist of great power. His novels, poems and dramas all reveal an intimate touch with nature. He is mercurial. His emotions pass swiftly as cloud shadows over the sea. His play, 'Once Upon a Time,' is once of the greatest attractions of the repertoire of the Royal Theatre, while his poems, 'Songs of the Sea' and 'English Socialists,' have a graceful charm and a full-throated sweetness of melody worthy of Keats and Morris.

"In 1885 Drachmann abandoned his old master, Brandes, denounced the exotic tradition, and declared himself a Conservative and a patriot.

"J. P. Jacobsen (1847-1885) was another of the new writers who had bathed in the rich streams with which Brandes flooded Denmark. He is a master student of the soul. His works proclaim him a metaphysician, with a scientific power of observation and analysis. Like Goethe and Wordsworth, he is the poet-scientist, placing his trust in the mind and the senses. His style is wonderfully colored, but it is not fantastic.

"Sophus Schandorph (1836-1901), who wrote

'Idealism and Realism,' was the scribe of the lower middle classes. His wit is blunt and biting and not over-particular, his outlook on life that of a man who has probed the soul of things and found there vanity, yet who accepts the position with a certain rough and blustering good humor. Schandorph's style is strong and masculine, often lacking in both grace and restraint and not always free from the grosser faults of bad taste and exaggeration. But—and this is a virtue of a kind—he remained true to the Brandes tradition."

These few instances are set down as representative examples of the Brandes influence on Danish literature. They are not conclusive evidence, but to a degree establish the fact that various schools of writing in Scandinavia owe their origin to what the great critic planned more than half a century ago.

CHAPTER XX

THE BRANDES ARCHIVE IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY OF COPENHAGEN

POSTERITY has a rather curious way of dealing with the past performances of men of letters. Whether Georg Brandes will live in the minds of people throughout the intellectual world for any considerable time beyond what is reasonably certain is something that the future alone can determine.

But in the land that at first misunderstood his mission in life but later made amends for its shortsightedness, there has been started an enterprise which is measurably sure to make Georg Brandes' achievements stand as a telling demonstration of a career as rare as it is unlikely to be duplicated. The Brandes Archive in the famous Royal Library of Copenhagen is the instrumentality through which the Danish scholar will live again as generation after generation in the capital of Denmark is afforded the opportunity to stand face to face with his vast pro-

duction; books of his in every European language, the original manuscripts, letters by the thousands addressed to Brandes from almost every part of the world.

The Brandes Archive is the result of a concerted move on the part of a number of his literary admirers on the seventieth anniversary of his birth, ten years ago. A permanent committee was organized, consisting of State Councillor Hegel, Otto Benzon, Vilhelm Andersen, Henrik Pontoppidan, Valdemar Vedel and Henri Nathansen. Carl S. Petersen, Chief Librarian of the Royal Danish Library, was chosen archivist.

Not only will this archive house Brandes' own works and correspondence but innumerable books by other authors dedicated to him by writers throughout the world. Brandes consented to leave all of his manuscripts and letters that may be obtained after his death, while one of the cabinets already contains his correspondence with J. P. Jacobsen, Nietzsche and August Strindberg. The real interest will come when there will be gathered together in the Brandes Archive the thousands of letters he has written to authors, statesmen, personal friends and others during his long career.

Already a great many people have visited the

Brandes Archive, where a bust of the great critic greets the visitors. It is the work of Max Klinger and is a gift of Brandes himself. So far he has never paid a visit to the archive that is to keep his memory green. He declares it would be too much like paying a call on one's own tomb.

Whether the youngest generation of Danish writers is fully conscious of the great debt it owes to Georg Brandes for his pioneer work in the literary vineyard is a debatable question. His early struggles were witnessed by a comparatively small company of those who remain alive to-day. But in looking over the names of those identified with the establishment of the Brandes Archive, these men by their interest show that they value what he has achieved for Danish letters. When in the days to come lovers of Shakespeare visit Elsinore for the relation it bears to the Prince of Denmark whom the English dramatist immortalized, they should derive additional pleasure and information by including the Royal Danish Library in their itinerary of Copenhagen sightseeing, since Georg Brandes, as the Archive will testify, did so much to give modern interpretation to not only Hamlet but the entire range of Shakespearean productions.